

The Next Uncompromising Generation Vanguard Perpetrators of the Holocaust

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Abstract

Despite a growing body of research that investigates the actions of “grass roots” perpetrator units of the Holocaust the general outcomes of this research, particularly regarding the police battalions, still appear to veer towards “ordinary men” versus “ideological warriors” arguments. This thesis attempts to transcend this somewhat polemical condition by investigating the structures and actions of these units by further differentiating between the profiles of the groups and individuals that formed the police battalions.

This thesis investigates the role of a group of junior officers as part of Police Battalions 314 and 304 and their influence on the actions of the battalions in Poland and Ukraine. Police Battalions 314 and 304 were at the forefront of carrying out Nazi racial policies in Poland and were in the vanguard of SS units that perpetrated the mass murders of the Ukrainian Jewish population in 1941 and 1942. This study uses SS and police personnel records in combination with the records of post-war trial investigations to analyse the impact of individual junior officers on the mass murder process within the context of the actions of the Police Battalions.

Most of the junior officers were former Hitler Youth leaders and were recruited then trained as SS officers to perform a pivotal role as the organisers, educators and role models of their subordinates in the companies and platoons of the police battalions. In performing this role these young SS men had a prominent influence on the mobilisation of their subordinates to carry out mass murder. This study illustrates that some perpetrators possessed considerable agency at the ground level and shows that a vanguard group occupied key positions and had a disproportionate influence on the mass murder process.

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to identify a vanguard group within Police Battalions 304 and 314 and assess the impact of this group on the actions of the battalions as whole units. I will argue that a distinct group of young junior officers that occupied the positions of company and platoon leaders in Police Battalions 314 and 304 had a disproportionate influence not only on the culture and behaviour of their sub-units, but also collectively a disproportionate influence on the actions of the battalions as whole units. An argument will be made that these men formed a relatively homogenous group that was distinct in a number of factors from the other members of the police battalions and were specially selected and trained to fill the roles of the platoon and company leaders. In these pivotal positions this group of young officers were acting as order givers as well as order receivers and were considered by the SS-police hierarchy to represent the future generation of SS leaders and an ideological vanguard of the police battalions. As a group these men can be considered to be among the vanguard perpetrators of the Holocaust that had a disproportionate influence on the evolution and radicalisation of the mass murders in Eastern Europe. This group was fast-tracked into becoming officers and all attended the same police officer training school at Berlin-Köpenick. Immediately following the course these men, with an average age of 23 in 1941, were deployed to their battalions either in Poland where the battalions were involved in the enforcement of Nazi racial policies, or in Ukraine at a time when the battalions were engaged in the mass murder of Jewish civilians. The influence of this group of perpetrators on the killing process will be examined within the context of the actions of Police Battalions 314 and 304. This study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on perpetrators of the Holocaust by examining the profiles and actions of perpetrator groups that have not been examined to a sufficient extent: the junior officers of the police battalions and Police Battalions 314 and 304. The study of these groups of perpetrators is important because they were vanguard perpetrator units operating directly at the forefront of some key stages of the mass murder process in Eastern Europe.

The theoretical framework for this study is taken from the work done by Michael Wildt on the leadership cadre of the RSHA.¹ Wildt has identified a relatively homogenous group that was comprised of comparatively young, highly educated men of the war youth generation, who came from lower-middle or middle class backgrounds. A significant portion of their self-identity lay in a veneration of youth that represented a break from the past and focus on the future as they perceived themselves to be the natural future leadership elite. Wildt argues that the fundamental characteristic of this group was to translate ideas into active leadership, to turn theory into practice.

¹ Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation. The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*; trans. Tom Lampert (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

The dominant structure of identity for this group was the Nazi worldview which functioned as a release from regulatory norms, including moral and legal norms, an ideological stance that was to create the scope for leadership based on unrestrained initiative and dynamic radicalism. The group biography of the young junior officers of the police battalions resembles Wildt's "uncompromising generation" in that they joined Nazi organisations at a young age, were all relatively well educated and came from lower-middle and middle class backgrounds. This study will demonstrate how the values based on active leadership, unbound by moral or legal norms, the same values that infused the leadership of the RSHA, were transferred through the ideological training of the young police officers who were intended to become the next generation of elite leaders of the SS and police ranks. It will then demonstrate how these values were translated into action in Poland and Ukraine by this vanguard group.

This study recreates the profiles, preparations and actions of Police Battalions 314 and 304 in order to assess the ideological, organisational and situational factors that contributed to the behaviour of the men that made up the battalions. The *Ordnungspolizei* (Orpo) battalions were at the forefront in implementing Nazi racial policy in Poland following the Nazi invasion in 1939 and the battalions that were assigned to Eastern Europe during the early stages of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 proved to be the decisive factor in carrying out the campaign of mass murder. Battalions 314 and 304 were two of the six Orpo battalions assigned to the HSSPF Russia South, Friedrich Jeckeln, which were collectively involved in the murder of considerably more Jews in Ukraine than Einsatzgruppen C and D combined. As Dieter Pohl has commented, the Orpo formed the "backbone of manpower" for "Jewish actions" in Ukraine.² A number of studies have been published on the Orpo as an organisation and on individual battalions, but the overall picture is far from complete. No systematic study on Battalions 314 and 304 exists. In this way I will contribute to the emerging broader picture on the actions of the German police battalions. However, rather than analysing the battalions only as whole entities, this study focuses mainly on the junior officers. Both battalions were made up of distinct groups with differing biographical backgrounds and contrasts can be drawn, not only between the officer corps and the men of the rank and file, but also within the officer ranks themselves. I will also distinguish between the training received by the rank and file and that received by the junior officers at the Berlin-Köpenick school. During the recreation of the actions of the battalions, I show that the battalions were often separated into sub-groups, usually at company or platoon level, that were led by the junior officers. These situations afforded the young

² Dieter Pohl, 'The Murder of Ukraine's Jews under German Military Administration and in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine', in Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (eds.) *The Shoah in Ukraine. History, Testimony, Memorialization* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp.40 and 60.

officers significant scope for initiative and opportunities to lead by example. By recreating the biographies and preparations of the battalions and showing how these relate to the behaviour of the units in Poland and Ukraine, I try to identify the emergence of radical elements within the battalions; elements that included the junior officer group, and how they influenced the actions of the battalions as whole units.

The focus of this study is on the junior officers and how the young men as individuals meshed with their role as junior officers within the context of the actions of the battalions as whole units. It will be argued here that the role of the junior officers was multifaceted and combined important elements that made their role pivotal to the police battalions' capacity to perpetrate mass murder. The role of company and platoon commander demanded that these young officers were responsible for: the ideological education and "cultivation" of their subordinates, the discipline and morale of their men, the organisation of official and social events of their units, the organisation of their subordinates' participation in massacres and, on occasion, were the authors of massacres of Jewish civilians. In addition to these tasks, the junior officers were to be role models for their subordinates and were to provide ideologically grounded justifications for the actions of the police units. There was some crossover between the responsibilities of these officers and those of the battalion commanders and platoon NCOs. The battalion commanders had overall responsibility for the actions of the battalions as a whole and in areas such as overall discipline, morale and organisation. The NCOs worked directly under the junior officers and were also at times involved in training activities, were heavily involved in mustering participation of the rank and file during the massacres and in maintaining discipline and morale in the platoons and squads of the battalions. However, as will be shown, the battalion commanders of Battalions 314 and 304 were often remote from the sub-units of the battalions, were not always present at the massacres and were not in daily contact with the rank and file as were the junior officers. The NCOs while important to the killing process were directly subordinate to the junior officers and did not have the same role as educators or the same level of organisational responsibilities. Crucially, they did not have had the same level of autonomy of action as the junior officers. While they were not the only ones that formed a "crucial nucleus" of perpetrators that had a disproportionate influence on the killing process on the ground, the distinct role and position in the police hierarchy of the junior officers made them the backbone of the police battalions.

This study is divided into three parts. The rest of this part will review some of the important studies on the lower-level, or "direct" perpetrators of the Holocaust with a particular focus on the German police, and will contextualise this study within the existing body of literature. I will identify here how this study makes an original contribution to the existing literature and how the thesis relates to

existing work in this area of study. In this part I also establish the research methodology that is employed for this study. This section begins with a closer examination of Wildt's work on the RSHA and explains how and why this work is used as the methodological framework for this study. I then discuss the biographical approach that is used and the merits and limitations of using this approach for the study of perpetrators at the lower levels of the Nazi hierarchy and the method of reconstructing the movements and actions of the sub-groups that made up the battalions in addition to an evaluation of the behaviour of the battalions as whole units. Finally, there is a discussion of the main source material that is used for this study, post-war trial documents, and the limits and problems of using this type of material as a main source.

The second part looks at the men of Police Battalions 314 and 304, how the units were trained and organised and analyses their experiences and actions in Poland before their involvement in mass killings in Ukraine. This part is comprised of chapters one, two and three. Chapter one examines the profiles of some individual officers and identifies the groups that made up the battalions. The main purpose of this chapter is to identify the subject group and distinguish this group from the rest of the battalion. I will show here that the police battalions were comprised of different groups from different backgrounds. The information presented in this chapter will be referred to throughout the following chapters and the biographical profiles that emerge from this section will be compared with profiles from other perpetrator groups. Most of the biographical information is drawn from the post-war trial documents, SS and Orpo personnel files and the profiles of other police battalions from the secondary literature. Chapter two examines the training of the battalion members before their deployment in Poland and Ukraine and will identify the differences between the training of the rank and file and the officer ranks. The main focus is on the training of the junior officers at Berlin-Köpenick. First, there will be a general overview of the training of the police after 1936, and an examination of the concepts of the ideal for the future SS and police officer corps. I then analyse the training of the rank and file of both battalions and the training of the officer candidates. I identify the main pedagogical concepts used at the Berlin officer school and the core themes of the training. Finally, I trace the arrival of the junior officers to the battalions and analyse the importance of the training of the junior officers and their influence as educators for their units. For the general information on the police training and the training of the rank and file, I have drawn on the work on police training by Jürgen Matthäus and Edward Westermann. For the training at Berlin-Köpenick, I use surviving documents from the training school held in the Bundesarchiv. In chapter three I recreate the experiences and actions of both battalions in Poland prior to their deployment into Ukraine. Here I assess the effects of the experiences on the culture and dynamics of the battalions with a focus on the emerging roles of the junior officers who were already with the battalions in

Poland. There will be a brief overview of some of the events in Poland immediately preceding the entry of the battalions and the historical context in which they were operating. I will then analyse the actions of Battalion 304 as a guard battalion at the Warsaw ghetto and the actions of Battalion 314 in Zamość which was involved in deportations, guarding Jewish civilians and the rounding up of forced labour. Finally I examine the roles of the junior officers in “hunting platoons” and as “educators”. The actions and experiences of both battalions in Poland will be mostly drawn from the post-war trial records.

This third part of this study recreates the roles of junior officers and their battalions in the mass murders of Jews in Ukraine from July 1941. This part is comprised of chapters four, five and six and the information for these chapters is drawn primarily from the post-war trial documents. Chapter four reconstructs the movements and actions of Police Battalion 314 in Ukraine during July and August 1941, a time when the battalion was operating in sub-units (company and platoon level) that were led by the junior officers. This chapter examines the early, smaller-scale killing actions in the Kovel area and identifies more precisely which individuals and sub-units did what, how and when. This chapter examines the behaviour of the junior officers operating in command positions of the sub-units and assesses how their actions relate to the theoretical and practical instruction they received during training and their experiences in Poland. Chapter five recreates the actions of the battalions during the larger-scale massacres in Ukraine from September 1941 to January 1942. In carrying out these massacres the battalions were mostly operating as whole units. In this chapter I demonstrate how the different groups and individuals behaved during these actions and identify patterns of behaviour within the groups. I show that although they were no longer in central command positions on the spot, the junior officers retained considerable influence on the actions of their subordinates. Chapter six identifies the actions involving the battalions, sub-groups and individuals after January 1942 until the end of the war, and the career progression of certain individuals. During the winter of 1941-42 the battalions were largely stationary and were involved in activities other than mass killing. This chapter examines SS ethics through the behaviour of some individual officers during this period.

Historiography

Scholars studying the genocidal activities perpetrated by the Nazis in Eastern Europe have sought to explain how people could possibly carry out these acts. What were the dominant factors that determined and motivated these perpetrators to authorise, organise and perpetrate the mass murder of unarmed civilians? Who were the killers and what type of people were they? Early

scholarly interest was devoted primarily to the workings and actions of the Nazi hierarchy with a particular focus on Hitler, the top tier Nazi leadership and the “criminal” agencies of the Gestapo and SS. Little attention was given to the Orpo, the Wehrmacht, and the “ordinary men” of these organisations.³ Only in the 1990s did the field of Holocaust studies see a decisive shift away from the more prominent members of the Nazi and SS hierarchy and overriding structures towards the actions of the lower-ranking perpetrators. Debates on the motivation of these “grass roots” perpetrators and perpetrator groups were started by Christopher Browning’s interpretations of the post-war trial records on members of Reserve Police Battalion 101, and developed following Daniel J. Goldhagen’s provocative response to Browning.⁴ Of these groups of low level killers, much of the scholarly attention on perpetrator studies in recent years has been devoted to the actions of the German Orpo. Writing almost a decade after the first publication of *Ordinary Men* in 1991 Browning noted that it “is no longer seriously in question that members of the German Order Police, both career professionals and reservists, in both battalion formation and precinct service or *Einzeldienst* were at the centre of the Holocaust and provided a major manpower source for carrying out numerous deportations, ghetto-clearing operations, and massacres”.⁵ It has been established that the manpower source provided by the Orpo during the invasion of Poland and the following occupation, the invasion of the Soviet Union and the following mass murders of Jewish civilians along with other victims in Eastern Europe, vastly outnumbered the more notorious Einsatzgruppen and therefore were directly responsible for a greater number of the murders.⁶ According to Gerhard Paul, the scholarly interest in the police formations that developed following the publication of the studies by Browning and Goldhagen is owed not only to the effect of the polarised explanatory positions adopted by the two authors that spurred the following debates, but also to the fact that among the functionaries of the Third Reich, one would be hard pressed to find a group in which “ordinary” citizens were turned into a pack of killers so quickly.⁷ However, it is not only the Orpo units that have drawn the attention of scholars in the wake of this debate. A significant portion of the literature on the “grass roots” perpetrators has been devoted to the members of the

³ Jürgen Matthäus, ‘Historiography and the Perpetrators of the Holocaust’, in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.199-201.

⁴ Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin, 2001). Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Abacus, 1997).

⁵ Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.143.

⁶ For example see Peter Longerich, *Holocaust. The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.186, and Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution. The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy 1939-1942* (London: Arrow Books Ltd, 2005), p.229. Browning states that 21 police battalions entered the Soviet Union at the start of the invasion, and Longerich states 23.

⁷ Gerhard Paul, ‘Die Täter der Shoah im Spiegel der Forschung’, in Paul (ed.), *Die Täter der Shoah. Fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), p.52.

Einsatzgruppen units and the ordinary soldiers of the Wehrmacht; an organisation whose involvement in the mass killings in Eastern Europe was not restricted to a supporting role, but which initiated and carried out independent mass killings.⁸ Following Browning's and Goldhagen's contributions, the debates have largely revolved around two models of explanation: group conformity and authority structures operating in small face-to-face groups, and the role of ideology.⁹ Many (though not all) of the scholars addressing the issue of the motivations of the many "direct" killing groups, have constructed more complex explanations that attempt to integrate the two positions, but there are still differing views on which factor or factors to privilege above others. The emerging picture of the perpetrators within the literature has become more differentiated and heterogeneous, but also less clear.¹⁰ One reason for the disparity in explanations of individual and group perpetrators at the lower-levels of the killing process is the shortage and inherent problems of the primary sources. Regarding the Orpo, relatively few official documents, personal diaries or letters have emerged, and the documents on the post-war trials of former policemen that form the main type of source used by many of the studies on the police battalions, revolve around testimonies given by the former policemen themselves and must therefore be handled with care.¹¹ A further reason for the wide disparity in explanations is the scope of focus, applied by the author in question. Some authors have concentrated on the moments of killing themselves or the immediate context of war, while others have broadened the chronological focus to the inter-war years to find meaning behind the actions of the perpetrators that occurred years later. Some authors have focused on one or a select few individuals, some on whole units or institutions and others on German society as a whole. This section reviews the more recent literature on the lower-level German perpetrators with a particular focus on how studies of the police battalions have evolved within this literature and highlights the contribution to the literature that this study makes.

Browning and Goldhagen

Browning's ground breaking study was primarily an analysis of the "ordinary men" of Reserve Police Battalion 101 and their actions in the Lublin district of the Generalgouvernement (GG) in 1942 and 1943. Browning argues that these men, who were operating within the broader context of a racist imperial war, were motivated primarily by group situational factors, including the effects of

⁸ Thomas Kühne, 'Male Bonding and Shame Culture: Hitler's Soldiers and the Moral Basis of Genocidal Warfare', in Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (eds.), *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers. Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.56.

⁹ Kühne, 'Male Bonding', p.57.

¹⁰ Paul, *Täter*, p.50.

¹¹ Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, 'Perpetrators of the Holocaust: a Historiography', in Jensen and Szejnmann, (eds.), *Ordinary People*, p.46.

brutalisation, careerism, conformity to the group and obedience to authority. The men of the rank and file of Reserve Battalion 101 were mainly lower and lower-middle class whose average age in 1942 was 39; a group considered to be too old for military service but heavily conscripted for reserve police duty. "These were men who had known political standards and moral norms other than those of the Nazis. Most came from Hamburg, by reputation one of the least Nazified cities in Germany, and the majority came from a social class that had been anti-Nazi in its political culture".¹² He concludes that "These men would not seem to have been a very promising group from which to recruit mass murderers on behalf of the Nazi version of a racial utopia free of Jews".¹³

The main point of criticism of Browning's explanation has been of the way in which it downplays ideologically-based motivation; in particular the role of antisemitism. Goldhagen provided one of the first, and most prominent, challenges to Browning's argument. In *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), Goldhagen agrees with Browning that Battalion 101 represented an approximate cross-section of German (male) society and that the men, on the whole, represented a form of "negative selection" as far as their affiliations to Nazism were concerned.¹⁴ However, Goldhagen rejects the components of Browning's multi-layered argument and instead employs a mono-causal explanation that it was a particular type of German antisemitism, "eliminationist antisemitism", that was the sole motivating factor for the perpetrators. Browning's more universal explanation is replaced by a more particular explanation in that it was only the Germans that wanted to eliminate the Jews, and did so when allowed to. Goldhagen's thesis was roundly rejected by scholars in the main for being too simplistic an explanation. However, it did spark a number of following studies that sought to mediate between the polarised positions presented by Browning and Goldhagen on perpetrator motivation; that of the immediate situational context and more long-term ideological impulses.

Ordinary Men

Browning's argument on the "ordinariness" of the men of Battalion 101 reacting to their immediate situational context was followed up by studies on the lower-level perpetrators by some social psychologists. In *Becoming Evil* (2002), James Waller has analysed the motivations of genocide perpetrators generally, but with a particular focus on the Holocaust from a social psychological perspective.¹⁵ His argument, similar to Browning's, is that it is predominantly ordinary people that commit genocide and that they can be regarded as extraordinary only by their actions, not because

¹² Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp.44-8.

¹³ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.48.

¹⁴ Goldhagen, *Willing Executioners*, p.210.

¹⁵ James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

of who they were. The majority of the perpetrators, according to Waller, were not distinguished by background, in their previous political affiliation and behaviour, or in their personal traits, as having been unusually likely or fit to become genocidal executioners.¹⁶ Perpetrators then, do not have to have abnormal personalities or strongly ingrained tendencies towards violence, or indeed, tendencies towards obedience or conformity.¹⁷ Therefore, as with Browning's provocative conclusion, anyone has the potential to become a mass murderer under certain conditions. Paul A. Roth makes an argument that perpetrator behaviour can, and has, been explained through social-scientific experiments.¹⁸ Roth defends explanations on the prime importance of the situational context, arguing that experimental situations can be created (Roth cites the Asch experiments on group conformity in particular), that demonstrate the central importance of factors that derive from the immediate context, such as group conformity and obedience to authority.¹⁹ Roth argues that, "Nazi behaviour would have been predictable had it been known then what we know now about conformity, obedience, and roles".²⁰ The main criticism levelled at the social-psychological universal explanations revolving around the immediate situational context is that they relegate the importance of the broader historical context and particular institutional environments in which the immediate situational events take place, that is to say, they do not ask how the situations in which these people find themselves are created, or by whom.

In a number of studies, including a micro-study on Reserve Police Battalion 45, Harald Welzer, like Waller and Roth, has also argued that most ordinary people have the potential to become mass killers under certain circumstances.²¹ However, Welzer argues that the process leading to mass killing was rooted within the context of the establishment of a particular Nazi morality. Goldhagen, Welzer argues, challenged assumptions that Germans under National Socialism were endowed with the same ethical and moral convictions that we ascribe to ourselves today. However, Welzer sees the motor that led to ordinary Germans being able to commit mass murder not in an "eliminationist antisemitism", but in more general "preconceptions regarding the absolute inequality of people".²² Welzer's explanation of perpetrator behaviour lies not in how the actors were able to overcome

¹⁶ Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp.8-13.

¹⁷ George C. Browder, 'Perpetrator Character and Motivation: An Emerging Consensus?', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies (HGS)*, 17, 3 (2003), p.493.

¹⁸ Paul A. Roth, 'Heart of Darkness: "Perpetrator History" and Why There is No Why', *History of the Human Sciences*, 17, 2/3 (2004), p.236.

¹⁹ Roth, 'Heart of Darkness', p.217.

²⁰ Roth, 'Heart of Darkness', p.220.

²¹ Harald Welzer, 'Mass Murder and Moral Code: Some Thoughts on an Easily Misunderstood Subject', *History of the Human Sciences*, 17, 2/3 (2004), pp.15-32; Welzer, 'On Killing and Morality: How Normal People Become Mass Murderers', in Jensen and Szejnmann, *Ordinary People*, pp.165-82; Welzer, *Täter. Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder werden* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2013).

²² Welzer, 'Moral Code', pp.17-18.

moral inhibitions, but how particular moral principles actually preserved a sense of “moral integrity”, including during the act of killing.²³

Following Browning’s study and the contributions to the study of the perpetrators from the social psychological perspective, there appears to be a strong level of agreement that the majority of the perpetrators did not have to be psychologically “abnormal” or virulently antisemitic in order to commit these crimes. However, the relative “normality” of these perpetrators has been challenged. Some historians consider that the immediate social and situational factors that fundamentally influenced the actions of these “ordinary men”, such as those related to obedience and conformity, in isolation from other motivational factors are not sufficient explanations either.²⁴ Two important studies on the German police published in the wake of Goldhagen’s book by Jürgen Matthäus and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, sought to mediate between the two positions established by Browning and Goldhagen.²⁵ Matthäus’ essay focuses on the actions of the rural Gendarmerie branch of the Order Police, a group that became more prominent in the killing process during the “second wave” of killings in Eastern Europe in 1942 and 1943.²⁶ Matthäus criticises claims that the low-level perpetrators were motivated purely by antisemitism. Instead, he argues for a kind of prevailing “common sense” rooted in the idea that so long as “certain legitimising methods”, including post-legitimation, were applied, it mattered little to these men what was actually done.²⁷ Longer-term factors, such as antisemitism and Nazi indoctrination along with established traditions of obedience to and identification with the state, should be considered as important factors, but need to be melded with the historical setting. In Matthäus’ view here, there is a gulf between broader ideological factors and the actual conditions that the men experienced on the ground.²⁸ Mallmann has argued that the German policemen involved in the mass killings on the ground were not on the whole ideologically motivated. In his findings, the majority of the gendarmes and members of the police battalions that were sent into the East, should not be considered Nazi “elite troops”. In the Orpo officer corps alone, Mallmann found that in 1941 66 percent of regular officers were Party members (13 percent were classified as “old fighters”) and only 30 percent belonged to the SS. Of the reserve officers, 67 percent were Party members (12 percent old fighters) and only 7 percent

²³ Welzer, ‘Moral Code’, p.30.

²⁴ Browder, ‘Perpetrator Character’, p.493.

²⁵ Jürgen Matthäus, ‘What About the “Ordinary Men”? The German Order Police and the Holocaust in the Occupied Soviet Union’, *HGR*, 10, 2 (1996), pp.134-50; Klaus-Michael Mallmann, ‘Vom Fußvolk der “Endlösung”. Ordnungspolizei, Ostkrieg und Judenmord’, *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, XXVI (1997), pp.355-91. See also, Mallmann, ‘Der Einstieg in den Genozid. Das Lübecker Polizeibataillon 307 und das Massaker in Brest-Litowsk Anfang Juli 1941’, in *Archiv für Polizeigeschichte*, 10 (1999), pp.82-88.

²⁶ Matthäus, ‘Ordinary Men’, pp.135-6.

²⁷ Matthäus, ‘Ordinary Men’, p.144.

²⁸ Matthäus, ‘Ordinary Men’, p.145.

were SS men. Including the rank and file, in 1941 only 25-33 percent of policemen were Party members.²⁹ It can be assumed that the number of SS men among the lower ranks was considerably less than the officer corps. These figures correspond to Browning's findings on Battalion 101 that only 25 percent of the men, including the rank and file, were Party members.³⁰ Mallmann argues that the lack of NSDAP and SS membership demonstrates that the Orpo were the least integrated part of Himmler's SS empire, as far as ideological commitment is concerned. However, the relatively low degree of political commitment, in terms of membership of party organs, does not mean that the majority of policemen were opposed to Nazism or that the Orpo was not a Nazi organisation as defined by the ideas of the regime. In fact, as Mallmann points out, there was a selection process for the police; an issue that Browning and Goldhagen pass over. The reservists were screened by the Gestapo, albeit at a relatively superficial level, and the views of the individuals towards Nazism were checked in consultation with local mayors and other officials.³¹ By the beginning of the war years then, the Orpo as an organisation was perhaps more "Nazified" than Browning's account of Reserve Battalion 101 concedes.

Organisational culture

In his study of the police battalions Westermann shows that Himmler, Daluge and the HSSPFs "sought to create an organisational culture within the police corps that glorified the concept of uniquely defined military identity married with the precepts of an SS ethic that embraced National Socialist racial philosophy and stressed the special obligations of membership in an exclusive hallowed order".³² This organisational culture was formed of increased efforts to militarise the police, incorporating military concepts of duty and absolute obedience and the physical and psychological merger of the ordinary police and the SS. The culture that embodied the organisation set the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and defined the standards of group membership thereby establishing Nazi ideological prerogatives, as embodied by SS ethics, as the institutional norm.³³ With this study, Westermann has developed his earlier case study on Police Battalion 310 by broadening the scope to include the organisation of the Uniformed Police as a whole.³⁴ Westermann's argument remains essentially the same however, that the organisational culture of the police created "ideological soldiers" prepared for a war of atrocity. Westermann acknowledges that the

²⁹ Mallmann, 'Fußvolk', pp.375-6. See also Paul, *Täter*, p.52.

³⁰ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.48.

³¹ Mallman, 'Fußvolk', p.376.

³² Edward B. Westermann, *Hitler's Police Battalions. Enforcing Racial War in the East* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), p.7.

³³ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.7-8.

³⁴ Westermann, "'Ordinary Men' or 'Ideological Soldiers'? Police Battalion 310 in Russia, 1942", *German Studies Review*, 21, 1 (1998), pp.41-68.

organisational culture was not all encompassing in that, as Browning shows, not all the policemen chose to kill, and some even attempted to prevent killing. However, the organisation as a whole ultimately meant that there were always enough volunteers to contribute to the killings.³⁵ Westermann's study attempts to overlap organisational with ideological factors, and a significant point where the two intersect can be found in the ideological training given to the policemen.³⁶ In *Ordinary Men*, Browning looks at the indoctrination efforts of the SS and police leadership and the effects of these efforts on the behaviour of the policemen in Battalion 101. Browning concludes that, like the rest of German society, the men of the battalion had experienced the incessant racist and antisemitic propaganda which, combined with the police indoctrination during basic training and the ongoing indoctrination lessons that each unit received, must have had an effect in "reinforcing general notions of Germanic racial superiority" and a "certain aversion" toward the Jews.³⁷ However, Browning is unconvinced that the ideological training had any effect on the men's preparedness to kill. Browning argues that the indoctrination material may have been more effective on younger policemen who had grown up during the Nazi dictatorship, but was "clearly not targeted at older reservists and in some cases was highly inappropriate or irrelevant to them".³⁸ Furthermore, Browning notes that little space in the indoctrination materials was devoted *explicitly* to antisemitism and the "Jewish question". Therefore, primarily because Browning is unable to find any material that he feels was designed specifically to harden the men for the task of killing Jews, he doubts the effectiveness of the ideological training in preparing the men of the battalion to these ends.³⁹ Mallmann agrees with Browning's assessment of the ideological conditioning of the policemen in that the regular ideological "lessons" and complementary training materials undoubtedly reinforced existing antisemitic and racial ideals, but considers it problematic to draw conclusions on the actual effects of the lessons on the minds of the policemen directly from the training materials. Mallmann also points out that this type of instruction was not given a central role in the training of the police; the time devoted to ideological training was only about two hours per week. For Mallmann, the effectiveness of this type of training lies less in promoting stereotypes of the racial enemy (*Feindbilder*) than in denigrating values such as humanitarianism and traditional soldierly traditions of chivalry as unmanly "weakness". These notions, Mallmann argues, lowered previous inhibitions and contributed to a "brutalisation of the psyche".⁴⁰

³⁵ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.235-6.

³⁶ Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.101.

³⁷ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.184. Browning cites Lieutenant Drucker as admitting he had a "certain aversion" towards Jews, p.182.

³⁸ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp.182-4.

³⁹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp.178-84.

⁴⁰ Mallmann, 'Fußvolk', p.378.

Westermann and Matthäus take somewhat different positions on the effectiveness of the ideological training given to the policemen from Browning and Mallmann. For Westermann, ideological training played a significant role in creating the organisational culture of the police. He argues that the Uniformed Police experienced the same racial indoctrination as the Security Police and SD and “did not prove immune from its effects”.⁴¹ Westermann states that the ambitions of Himmler and Daluge went further than conditioning the policemen as convinced antisemites, but extended to the moulding of “political soldiers” that were to become the future defence against racial and political enemies based on the creation of a martial identity embedded with Nazi ideological principles.⁴² It is in the more general application of Nazi ideology and SS ethics within the ranks of the police rather than purely antisemitic directives that Westermann places the effectiveness of the training on the impulse for committing mass murder. Matthäus argues that ideological education served as the principal tool for the merger of the SS and police in the attempts to create the future State Security Corps. From 1934, the main idea in formulating SS schooling lay less in purely conveying ideological and racist ideas than in creating a solid ideological state of mind, or *Haltung*, based on a concept of the primacy of the Nordic race.⁴³ In order to achieve and maintain the *Haltung* of the policeman, Matthäus shows that along with the more formal ideological lessons, informal get-togethers and other social occasions were employed to immerse the individual within an ideological atmosphere.⁴⁴ Matthäus’ findings correspond with the findings of Browning and Mallmann in that, quantitatively, antisemitic issues, though present, did not feature prominently in the training curricula of the SS and police. However, even if antisemitic messages were not reiterated at every opportunity, Matthäus argues that antisemitic imperatives, in particular the need to address the “Jewish question”, “formed an integral part of the esprit de corps in Himmler’s realm of influence”, through the institutional structures of the police, in peer adaptation and organisational culture.⁴⁵ Therefore, the effectiveness of the training on turning the policemen into killers lies less in the relative volume of antisemitic pronouncements, or in blueprints for action with respect to the treatment of the Jews the policemen were encountering, or about to encounter, than offering rationalisations for what was happening in the minds of the killers and those contributing to

⁴¹ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.11.

⁴² Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.233.

⁴³ Jürgen Matthäus, ‘Die “Judenfrage” als Schulungsthema von SS und Polizei’, in Matthäus, Konrad Kwiet, Jürgen Förster and Richard Breitman (eds.), *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord? “Weltanschauliche Erziehung” von SS, Polizei und Waffen-SS im Rahmen der “Endlösung”* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2003), pp.35-6.

⁴⁴ Matthäus, ‘Anti-Semitism as an Offer: The Function of Ideological Indoctrination in the SS and Police Corps During the Holocaust’, in Dagmar Herzog (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies Vol VII: The Holocaust in International Perspective* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), pp.119-120.

⁴⁵ Matthäus, ‘Anti-Semitism’, p.120.

the killing actions.⁴⁶ Matthäus concludes that leading up to and during the war, the principle that the Jews had to be treated as enemies, even if they were unarmed, was based on the basic training received by the policemen, the effectiveness of which, in turn, had foundations in existing antisemitic prejudices.⁴⁷

Westermann and Matthäus place ideological imperatives within an organisational context. However, the effects of the training, that played a major role in the creation of the “organisational culture” of the police and the *Haltung* of the individual policemen themselves, could not operate in isolation. It appears that the training of the police was intended to build on existing prejudices, such as antisemitism, but also these prejudices and mind set were intended to lead to action. According to Mallmann, the “ordinariness” of the policemen lies precisely in the fact that they were not drawn from the fringes, but from the heart of society and should be considered a “cross-section”, but of an increasingly Nazified society.⁴⁸

The *Volksgemeinschaft*

Some recent studies have sought to move away from the study of institutional structures and have focused on German society as a whole under the Nazi dictatorship as providing the locus for the wartime actions of the perpetrators.⁴⁹ Wildt has argued that the processes of bureaucratic discrimination, legal ordinances and violent anti-Jewish actions, so much of which were initiated at the “grass roots” level, transformed German society into an “aggressive and racist *Volksgemeinschaft*”.⁵⁰ Alexander B. Rossino has argued that the Nazi efforts to reshape German society into a *Volksgemeinschaft* by formally categorising people along biological lines provided the context in which the young German men that formed the bulk of the rank and file of the Wehrmacht were raised. Rossino concludes that after years of exposure to active indoctrination by the Nazis that built on popular sentiments of racial devaluation and hatred, along with powerful militarist and revanchist sentiments, “it should come as no surprise that with the outbreak of war, military discipline quickly broke down and officers were generally unable to control the behaviour of their men”.⁵¹ Claudia Koonz has examined what she terms the “Nazi conscience”; an exclusionary, secular ethos “that extended reciprocity only to members of the Aryan community”, as defined by racial

⁴⁶ Matthäus, ‘Anti-Semitism’, p.122.

⁴⁷ Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, p.59.

⁴⁸ Mallmann, ‘Fußvolk’, p.376.

⁴⁹ Mark Roseman, ‘The Lives of Others – Amid the Deaths of Others: Biographical Approaches to Nazi Perpetrators’, *Journal of Genocide Research (JGR)*, 15, 4 (2013), p.446.

⁵⁰ Michael Wildt, *Hitler’s Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion. Violence Against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919-1939* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), p.3.

⁵¹ Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland. Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), p.226.

scientists and cultivated by Nazi Party cadres that formed a genocidal consensus within Germany during the six years prior to the invasion of Poland in 1939. According to Koonz, the “Final Solution” took shape during this period, not on the Eastern Front during the war. The perpetrators, as members of this exclusive community, had internalised and understood the necessity of racial extermination which moved them to improvise and often exceed orders when offered the opportunity in Eastern Europe. In short, “Germans who in 1933, were ordinary western Europeans had become, in 1939, anything but”.⁵² Thomas Kühne has put forward a similar argument to Koonz in locating the importance for the motivation of the perpetrators in a widespread belief in the concept of a racial community, or *Volksgemeinschaft*. However, in contrast to Koonz and Wildt who focus on the exclusionary side of pre-war Nazi ethics, Kühne highlights the effects of a sense of belonging to the “in-group”.⁵³ Kühne argues that there was an ideological foundation to the sentiments of comradeship among the soldiers and policemen formed by a combination of stereotypes of the “enemy”, prominently antisemitic stereotypes, and the experience of community that provided the motivation of the men in the units involved in mass killing. The police battalions and other killing units therefore, “provide evidence that the *Volksgemeinschaft* really existed on a daily basis” in strengthening the bonds between themselves by their shared involvement in genocidal violence. In committing violent and murderous acts, the men and women that formed these mini-communities experienced togetherness “by terrorising others and by transgressing moral conventions on behalf of the *Volksgemeinschaft*”.⁵⁴

These studies that examine the socialisation of German society during the pre-war period under the Nazi regime question the “normalcy” of the German perpetrators, when measured against assumed common ethics of modern “western” societies and ideological commitment on the part of the perpetrators move to the centre of their explanations. There have been some recent challenges to these arguments however. Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer are less convinced about the relevance of ideological motivation in explaining the murderous actions of the Wehrmacht arguing that, as a rule, German soldiers were apolitical and that abstract concepts such as a “global Jewish conspiracy”, a “Bolshevist promotion of genetic inferiority” and the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* remain concepts of limited explanatory value in explaining their actions.⁵⁵ In fact, within the considerable number of transcripts of conversations between (predominantly Wehrmacht) POWs analysed by

⁵² Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (London: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp.1-15.

⁵³ Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide. Hitler's Community 1918-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp.2-5.

⁵⁴ Kühne, *Belonging*, pp.168-9.

⁵⁵ Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten. On Fighting, Killing and Dying. The Secret Second World War Tapes of German POWs* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2013), p.319.

Neitzel and Welzer, they were unable to find mention of the concept of a *Volksgemeinschaft* at all. Instead of ideological ideas, they contend that a military value system was far more important in influencing the soldiers' perceptions, decisions and actions.⁵⁶ To what degree then do the actual settings and circumstances that the men of the perpetrator units find themselves in influence their behaviour?

War and colonialism

Gerald Weinberg has argued that those who study the war and the demographic revolution that the Nazis planned and partially carried out, of which the murder of the European Jews was a central part, "need to see the two as two sides of the same coin". "The failure to connect the war and the Holocaust makes both less comprehensible".⁵⁷ However, opinions differ as to how the context of being in a "war zone" influenced the behaviour of the perpetrators.

In a study of soldiers' letters home, Michaela Kipp has also questioned the role of ideological conviction in explaining the soldiers' motivations for involvement in mass murder.⁵⁸ Kipp has found that in the considerable number of letters analysed, only a minority drew on arguments common to National Socialist ideology of Jews as the creators of Bolshevism and worldwide Jewish conspiracies. Instead, in the absence of "blind, ideological hatred", most of the soldiers were radicalised by more mundane concerns regarding their perceptions of the conditions in which they found themselves, such as factors relating to a lack of general "hygiene" and the need to impose "German order".⁵⁹ Kipp agrees with Neitzel and Welzer that the reasons behind the actions of the soldiers lie less in abstract worldviews and more in "concrete places, purposes, and functions", and especially in the smaller groups of which they were part.⁶⁰ On the role of the gendarmerie during the "second sweep" in Belorussia, Eric Haberer argues that conformity to the group played an essential role in the cohesion and coercion of the German gendarmes operating in remote posts within a potentially deadly environment.⁶¹ However, Haberer points out that this small group, although reacting to one another, were also part of an environment in which patterns of barbarism had already been established by the Einsatzgruppen, police battalions and military creating a climate of

⁵⁶ Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, pp.238-9.

⁵⁷ Gerald Weinberg, 'Two Separate Issues? Historiography of World War II and the Holocaust', in David Bankier and Dan Michman (eds.), *Holocaust Historiography in Context. Emergence, Challenges, Polemics and Achievements* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), pp.380-2.

⁵⁸ Michaela Kipp, 'The Holocaust in the Letters of German Soldiers on the Eastern Front (1939-44)', *JGR*, 9, 4 (2007), pp.601-615.

⁵⁹ Kipp, 'German Soldiers', pp.609-11.

⁶⁰ Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p.7.

⁶¹ Eric Haberer, 'The German Police in Belorussia, 1941-1944, Part III: Methods of Genocide and the Motives of German Police Compliance', *JGR*, 3, 3 (2001), p.399.

“unprecedented savagery”.⁶² This is a view shared by Browning in his later work on the *Origins of the Final Solution*, in which he argues that, as well as the members of the group reacting to each other, the broader context; the stage reached in the persecution of Jews and others (time) and the conditions in which they find themselves and their perceptions of them (space), plays a significant role in influencing the actions of the men on the ground.⁶³

Both Browning and Bartov have emphasised the role of the brutalisation of the perpetrators. Browning showed that the men of Battalion 101 became brutalised towards killing with repeated involvement in these acts. Bartov, on the other hand, argued that the soldiers on the Eastern Front became more brutalised, and more receptive to ideological ideas because of the dramatic conditions and hardships of warfare.⁶⁴ Browning’s arguments on the brutalisation or acclimatisation to violence by repeated involvement appears to be justifiable in explaining how some perpetrators, once acclimatised, were able to continue killing. However, this argument possesses less explanatory power in explaining how many of the policemen were able to murder, or at least contribute to the murder actions, during the initial massacres. Bartov’s argument is lacking as an explanation for the many perpetrator units that were involved in mass killings and other atrocities before being involved in the extreme conditions on the Eastern Front. Is this a gap that can be filled by prior ideological conditioning?

Alexander B. Rossino argues that the eradication of political and ideological enemies as defined by Nazi racial and biological terms, and as practiced by the German military, began not with the start of the war of annihilation in 1941, but in Poland in 1939.⁶⁵ As opposed to Bartov’s argument on the brutalisation of attitudes, Rossino shows that the Wehrmacht was already functioning according to a *modus operandi* “that was largely compatible with the violent methods and ideological goals of National Socialism” in Poland in 1939.⁶⁶ The outbreak of war then, provided the context for an explosion of attitudes that had already been “poisoned by prejudice, racism, and the exaltation of violence towards others”.⁶⁷ Hannes Heer has argued that Bartov “underestimates the soldiers’ own capacity for moral assessment”, a moral reorientation that Heer argues began during the pre-war period and already “belonged to most soldiers’ basic frame of mind” during the early, successful

⁶² Haberer, ‘German Police’, p.401.

⁶³ Browning, *Origins*, p.299.

⁶⁴ Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*, p.28.

⁶⁵ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.xv.

⁶⁶ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.121.

⁶⁷ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.226.

advances of the German army.⁶⁸ Regarding the Orpo, Mallmann also argues that the context of ethnic cleansing, violent collective “reprisals” and racial persecution in Poland, in addition to the everyday experience of the dichotomy of the relationship of *Herren-* and *Untermenschen*, provided a “laboratory of race politics” and habitualisation of violence that formed the foundation for the genocidal explosion from 1941 in the former Soviet territories.⁶⁹ Mallmann rejects arguments on the brutalising effects of war on the policemen as the men from the police battalions who became killers had just volunteered and had no time for a gradual acclimatisation to the violence.⁷⁰ The fact that the violence of war has a brutalising and radicalising effect on the perceptions and actions of those involved is probably accepted by most scholars investigating the actions of the direct perpetrators. However, apart from exceptions such as Battalion 310, it appears that few of the policemen had experienced actual combat and significant losses prior to their involvement in killing and therefore could not have had a significant influence in explaining the actions of these perpetrators.⁷¹ Instead, arguments such as those offered by Rossino, Heer and Mallmann place more emphasis on the existing perceptions that the soldiers and policemen brought with them into the context of war and that already in Poland, before the brutalising effects of the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, soldiers and policemen were acting in accordance with murderous Nazi racial policies.

For Mallmann the context of war is important in explaining the motivation of the police perpetrators, but this is based on a situational radicalisation of an ingrained image of the enemy in “Jewish Bolshevism”; a *Feindbild* that had developed since 1917. This ingrained stereotype radicalised and appeared to be verified when the policemen were confronted with the “alien” *Ostjuden* in enemy territory and developed a “virtual reality” that in the minds of the perpetrators legitimised the elimination of this “collective security risk” as an act of “self-defence”.⁷² The connection between the murder of Jewish civilians in the East and perceptions of the Jews as a collective security threat as a motivational factor for the perpetrators has been examined in a number of studies. Waitman Beorn has attempted to analyse how the connection between the anti-

⁶⁸ Hannes Heer, ‘How Amoral became Normality. Reflections on the Mentality of German Soldiers on the Eastern Front’, in Heer and Klaus Naumann (eds.) *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), pp.330 and 337.

⁶⁹ Mallmann, ‘“...Mißgeburten, die nicht auf diese Welt gehören”. Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei in Polen 1939-1941’, in Mallmann and Bogdan Musial (eds.), *Genesis des Genozids. Polen 1939-1941* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), pp.80-2.

⁷⁰ Mallmann, ‘Einstieg’, cited in Paul, *Täter*, p.52.

⁷¹ Westermann, ‘Ideological Soldiers?’

⁷² Mallmann, ‘Ordnungspolizei in Polen’, p.82 and the discussions in Paul, *Täter*, p.52 and Szejnmann, ‘Perpetrators of the Holocaust’, p.41.

partisan war and the killing of Jewish civilians was implemented at unit-level on the ground.⁷³ Beorn shows that a formulation was transmitted to Wehrmacht rear units in Belarus in September that stated that all Jews were Bolsheviks, all Bolsheviks were partisans, or at least partisan supporters, and therefore, all Jews were partisans or supporters.⁷⁴ As demonstrated by Westermann, the militarisation of the police played a major role in the reorganisation of the institution and formed a key part of the organisational culture within the ranks of the policemen. Rossino has shown that this process went hand in hand with the legitimisation of the murder of civilians as military operations. The militarisation of the police had two main benefits: first, the SS-police units could operate more efficiently in the field in cooperation with the army and, second, due to the militarised nature of these units, commanders could couch orders for murder in terms of military necessity.⁷⁵ However, this formula, especially when considering the murder of children, as a rationalisation for the direct perpetrators as well as the higher-ranking policy makers, leans heavily on fantastical perceptions. A. Dirk Moses has developed an argument that genocide “is governed more by fantastical security imperatives than by aesthetics of racial purity”. That whole Jewish communities were targeted pre-emptively, suggests a significant level of paranoia as the basis for Nazi “security” measures.⁷⁶ However, the extent to which Himmler and his subordinates actually believed in the inherent threat behind each and every Jew is unclear.⁷⁷

An increasing number of studies over the past decade have looked at the colonial dimension to the war and Nazi population policies in Eastern Europe, particularly the relationship between Nazi colonial aspirations and the Holocaust.⁷⁸ Some of these studies have looked beyond the role of colonialism in Nazi ideology and pronouncements of colonial aspirations by Hitler and Himmler and applied the colonial paradigm to the actions of the perpetrators. Wendy Lower has argued that the colonial setting of Nazi rule “provides an ideological framework for understanding German aims and

⁷³ Waitman Beorn, ‘A Calculus of Complicity: The Wehrmacht, the Anti-Partisan War, and the Final Solution in White Russia, 1941-42’, *Central European History*, 44 (2011), p.309. Waitman Wade Beorn, *Marching into Darkness. The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in Belarus* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁷⁴ Beorn, ‘Calculus of Complicity’, pp.310-2.

⁷⁵ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.229.

⁷⁶ A. Dirk Moses, ‘Paranoia and Partisanship: Genocide Studies, Holocaust Historiography, and the “Apocalyptic Conjunction”’, *The Historical Journal*, 54, 2 (2011), p.574. See also Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide. Keywords and the Philosophy of History’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide. Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp.3-54.

⁷⁷ Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution. A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.175 and 195.

⁷⁸ Moses, ‘Empire’. Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire. German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Carroll P. Kakel, III, *The American West and the Nazi East. A Comparative and Interpretive Perspective* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire. Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Penguin, 2008). Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) among others.

behaviour in Ukraine.”⁷⁹ The mid-level German civilian administrators involved in organising the mass resettlement plans and mass murders in Ukraine, according to Lower, placed themselves within a longer tradition of a Germanic colonisation of the eastern territories.⁸⁰ Elizabeth Harvey shares a similar view to Lower in that she argues that the Nazi settlement planners in Poland viewed their tasks as central to a colonial enterprise in the Nazi vision of expansion in Eastern Europe. This vision stood in long established traditions of a Germanic “cultural mission” in the “East”, but also an opportunity to apply modern research in various fields, including that of “racial theory” to the practice of population management.⁸¹

Jürgen Zimmerer has been at the forefront of investigating the relevance of colonial history on the Holocaust.⁸² Zimmerer argues that the average German perpetrator perceived his actions to be standard behaviour in dealing with troublesome “natives” in the tradition of colonial war and conquest.⁸³ “For the perpetrators, the fact that brutal guerrilla warfare, resettlement and a slave economy had always accompanied colonialism helped to inspire and legitimate their own participation”.⁸⁴ Elissa Mailänder Koslov has applied this line of enquiry to the experience and actions of the male and female guards at the Majdanek camp.⁸⁵ Koslov contends that the conjuncture of prior prejudices, the cultural colonial context as perceived by the perpetrators and the concrete experiences of working as a guard, led to the ready use of violence.⁸⁶ Koslov cites the intoxicating effects of these ordinary Germans from modest backgrounds being immediately advanced to the highest social levels as German colonial masters, purely on the basis of their “racial” and cultural distinctions.⁸⁷ Like Koslov, Lower has looked at the “psychological thrill” of lording over life and death and the effects on the behaviour of Reich women empowered as colonisers in the “East”.⁸⁸ Browning has argued that a German gendarmerie unit became corrupted by the influence

⁷⁹ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.10.

⁸⁰ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.3. See also Lower, “‘On Him Rests the Weight of the Administration’: Nazi Civilian Rulers and the Holocaust in Zhytomyr”, in Brandon and Lower (eds.), *Shoah*, pp.224-247.

⁸¹ Elizabeth Harvey, ‘Management and Manipulation: Nazi Settlement Planners and Ethnic German Settlers in Occupied Poland’, in Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (eds.), *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century. Projects, Practices, Legacies* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.95.

⁸² Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘The Birth of the *Ostland* out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination’, in A. Dirk Moses and Dan Stone (eds.), *Colonialism and Genocide* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp.101-23.

⁸³ Zimmerer, ‘*Ostland*’, p.103 and p.111.

⁸⁴ Zimmerer, ‘*Ostland*’, p.123.

⁸⁵ Elissa Mailänder Koslov, “‘Going east’: Colonial Experiences and Practices of Violence among Female and Male Majdanek Camp Guards (1941-44)”, *JGR*, 10, 4 (2008), pp.563-82.

⁸⁶ Koslov, ‘Going East’, pp.564 and 578.

⁸⁷ Koslov, ‘Going East’, pp.570-1.

⁸⁸ Lower, ‘Male and Female Holocaust Perpetrators and the East German Approach to Justice, 1949-1963’, *HGS*, 24, 1, (2010), p.71. On German women as agents of Nazi empire-building, see also Lower, *Hitler’s Furies. German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (London: Vintage, 2014).

of racial imperialism while “acting as a ‘master race’ on occupied territory”; notions and experiences that changed their attitudes and behaviour.⁸⁹

Whether the focus is on the context of a war zone, security imperatives or perceptions of a colonial environment guided by historical precedents, all of these paradigms invoke “zones of exception”, environments in which the parameters of permissible behaviour differed significantly from the soldiers’ and policemen’s experiences of domestic civilian life.⁹⁰ Bloxham has argued that the “notion of Eastern Europe as a ‘land of exception’ was culturally determined and so determined in much broader swathes of German society (and that of other western societies) than the Nazi or Wehrmacht leadership”, and conditioned the behaviour of the lower-ranking, “direct” perpetrators at least as much as certain attitudes towards specific victim groups.⁹¹ In this way we can see the interaction between ideological imperatives, such as antisemitism, fear and hatred of Bolshevism, colonial perceptions of the “East”, or a more general *Feindbild*; whether culturally manifested or cultivated through institutional training, or indeed both, and these perceptions coloured the actual experiences of the soldiers and policemen in Eastern Europe within the context of war.

Initiative

Recent studies that investigate the events at unit level or in regional studies in Eastern Europe and the evolution towards genocide, while maintaining the primacy of ideology place considerable emphasis on decisions on the periphery and reveal considerable scope for initiative at the “grass roots” level.⁹² Two important studies by Wendy Lower and Jürgen Matthäus investigate the radicalising dynamic between the Nazi leadership and their subordinates on the periphery during the early stages of occupation of the former Soviet territories in Eastern Europe.⁹³ In a case study of the mid-ranking Nazi local leaders stationed in Zhytomyr, Lower shows how these men on the periphery interacted with the central Nazi leadership through a mutually reinforcing and radicalising dynamic based on a consensus of antisemitism which she terms “anticipatory obedience”. Lower is critical of other regional studies that reduce the influence of higher-ranking Nazis in shaping the Holocaust on the ground and argues that that Hitler and Himmler retained their presence on the periphery through personal visits and intermediary agents embodied in the HSSPFs. In the case of Ukraine, the

⁸⁹ Browning, *Nazi Policy*, p.150.

⁹⁰ For a discussion on the role of “licence” on agency, see Aristotle Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism. The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁹¹ Bloxham, *Final Solution*, pp.285 and 294.

⁹² Stone, *Histories*, pp.102-3.

⁹³ Lower, “‘Anticipatory Obedience’ and the Nazi Implementation of the Holocaust in the Ukraine: A Case Study of Central and Peripheral Forces in the Generalbezirk Zhytomyr, 1941-1944”, *HGS*, 16, 1 (2002), pp.1-22. Matthäus, ‘Controlled Escalation: Himmler’s Men in the Summer of 1941 and the Holocaust in the Occupied Soviet Territories’, *HGS*, 21, 2 (2007), pp.218-42.

HSSPF South until October 1941 was Friedrich Jeckeln who, as Himmler's direct subordinate, represented the "intersection of center and periphery".⁹⁴ As the top leadership could not micromanage the hundreds of regional and district administrators, these local administrators were granted "substantial leeway" for action, giving way to opportunities to exceed or even disobey official policy. However, although local leaders planned and carried out these actions without explicit orders, according to Lower, these actions would follow the sanctioning of mass murder as a "solution" and "often only because it was tacitly understood or implied that this was expected from the higher-ups".⁹⁵ Matthäus also looks at the interaction between central and peripheral agents, but places more emphasis than Lower on the importance of initiative shown at the lower levels of the Nazi hierarchy acting on the periphery. Matthäus argues that Himmler and his immediate subordinates employed three main types of intervention to radicalise the treatment of Jews: by sanctioning *after the fact*, aggressive actions against Jews; by pushing for increased violence; and by reprimanding those who "deviated from the desired course of action either by showing too little initiative or by going too far beyond their orders".⁹⁶ However, Matthäus argues that the process of escalation, which he terms "controlled escalation", was driven less by direct intervention by the SS leadership than by "the eagerness of subordinate officers to adopt new, more radical measures"; as long as their superiors provided the "support, encouragement, legitimisation or even tacit acceptance" for their actions, junior officers and even the rank and file policemen could take the initiative.⁹⁷ By extending agency all the way down to the ordinary policemen who actually carried out the mass murder actions in Eastern Europe, Matthäus' findings are particularly relevant to this study. If the killing process was shaped to a significant extent by the perpetrators on the ground, then it would seem necessary to know more about who these men were.

Biography

Michael Mann's study of the biographical data of 1,581 perpetrators shows that the most of these men came from social-economic sectors of German society and regions, especially lost territories and border regions, which were most likely to be attracted to Nazism. Mann concludes that most of these perpetrators were probably ideologically driven killers and that they resembled "real Nazis" more than "ordinary Germans".⁹⁸ He also found that as a rule, the higher the rank of the individual

⁹⁴ Lower, 'Anticipatory Obedience', pp.1-3.

⁹⁵ Lower, 'Anticipatory Obedience', pp.6-14.

⁹⁶ Matthäus, 'Controlled Escalation', p.222.

⁹⁷ Matthäus, 'Controlled Escalation', p.233.

⁹⁸ Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy. Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.239. Mann, 'Were the Perpetrators of Genocide "Ordinary Men" or "Real Nazis"? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies', *HGS*, 14, 3 (2000), p.331.

meant a greater level of commitment to Nazism; therefore, there were more committed Nazis in the higher ranks of core SS and NSDAP organisations than in the auxiliary police units such as Battalion 101. However, the majority of Mann's sample were of officer rank, leaving the rank and file perpetrators somewhat underrepresented.⁹⁹ Because of this Mann is careful about drawing conclusions based on this sample concerning the ideological motivations of the lower-ranking members of the execution units. Younger perpetrators are also underrepresented in Mann's sample; only 159 individuals from the sample were born after 1913. By far the largest age cohort in Mann's sample is those who were born from 1901-1912 followed by the cohort born before 1901, men who filled the Nazi leadership positions.¹⁰⁰ It is these two generations that have dominated scholarly interest of late as far as biographical profiles, particularly regarding the SS organisations are concerned.

The generation that filled the early key positions in the SS leadership were mostly veterans of the First World War who struggled with their careers in the turbulent post-war period; embodied in the HSSPFs and the concentration camp commandants.¹⁰¹ The second generation, or "war youth generation" of SS- police leaders, has been the subject of a biographically based investigation by Michael Wildt.¹⁰² Building on Ulrich Herbert's study of Werner Best, Wildt uses a sample of 221 individuals who formed the leadership corps of the RSHA. In this sample, Wildt found a "strikingly homogenous generational group", in that 77 percent were born after 1900, most were from lower-middle class families and were relatively highly educated; 75 percent had university degrees, with 50 percent of these achieving a doctoral degree. These men were part of the "war youth generation", moulded by the experience of being denied the opportunity of "proving themselves" at the front and the economic difficulties and political radicalism that characterised the post-war situation in Germany.¹⁰³ Rather than adopt a purely "deterministic biographical model", with which the perpetrator's motivations are deduced from the experiences of youth, Wildt employs a more complex model that places the individual biographies within historical context and particular institutional structures.¹⁰⁴ Wildt argues that these men were recruited to the security police and SD because of their intellectual background, conceptual radicalism and ideological activism, but equally were radicalised themselves by these new type of Nazi institutions that had deliberately removed

⁹⁹ Mann, *Dark Side*, pp.215-17.

¹⁰⁰ Mann, *Dark Side*, p.238.

¹⁰¹ Roseman, 'The Lives of Others', p.452.

¹⁰² Wildt, *Generation*. Wildt, 'The Spirit of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA)', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6, 3 (2005), pp.333-349.

¹⁰³ Wildt, 'Spirit', p.338. Ulrich Herbert, *Best. Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903-1989* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996).

¹⁰⁴ Wildt, *Generation*, pp.8-10.

themselves from traditional administrative boundaries; especially with the opportunities that came with the outbreak of war and conquest.¹⁰⁵ The RSHA itself “effectively arose through the policies implemented by its actors, whose own practices were in turn influenced and structured by the institution they themselves had created”.¹⁰⁶ Wildt has called for the need to distinguish between the different types of perpetrators, according to their positions and roles in the extermination process in addition to their background and training.¹⁰⁷ Would this approach prove fruitful in the study of the lower-level, “direct” perpetrator groups?

Andrej Angrick has recently shown how heterogeneous, in terms of personnel backgrounds, Einsatzgruppe D was. Below the level of the commanders from Wildt’s leadership cadre were: 90 recent graduates of the Berlin-Charlottenburg Leadership School; four companies taken as whole units from Police Battalion 9; individuals from the Waffen-SS; translators from the USSR and a group of civilians deemed eligible for “emergency service”. This last group who would work as the lorry drivers and radio operators were recruited for their practical qualifications rather than ideological commitment. Einsatzgruppe D then, was a “motley group” of 600 men wearing a few different uniforms. Browning has established that a division of labour during the murder actions is important in understanding the dynamics of the execution process at the ground level; not everyone in the unit had to shoot continuously in order to fulfil the task. However, nearly a decade after *Ordinary Men*, Browning felt compelled to modify his earlier conclusions. Browning’s updated argument is that many of the minority of “eager killers” were “ideologically motivated men ready to kill Jews and other so-called enemies of the Reich from the start”; situational and organisational factors played little or no role in shaping their behaviour. These men, Browning states, had a disproportionate influence on the ground and formed a “crucial nucleus for the killing process”, in much the same way as the middle-echelon RSHA leaders and in the Nazi top ranks.¹⁰⁸ Beorn and Haberer agree with Browning’s revision. Haberer argues that among the gendarmerie units there was a small group of ideologically driven *active perpetrators* who appear to have taken pride in their murderous actions, but this minority were not representative of the mind-set of the gendarmes generally.¹⁰⁹ In Beorn’s panzer company, there was a small group of motivated perpetrators who repeatedly participated in atrocities.¹¹⁰ If there was a minority group of motivated men that had a disproportionate influence on the events on the ground, who then were they and how can they be differentiated from their

¹⁰⁵ Wildt, *Generation*, p.447.

¹⁰⁶ Wildt, *Generation*, p.18.

¹⁰⁷ Wildt, *Generation*, p.8.

¹⁰⁸ Browning, *Nazi Policy*, p.175.

¹⁰⁹ Haberer, ‘German Police’, p.398.

¹¹⁰ Beorn, ‘Negotiating Murder: A Panzer Signal Company and the Destruction of the Jews of Peregruznoe, 1942’, *HGS*, 23, 2 (2009), p.158.

peers? In a recent study of the police battalions that served as the guard units of the Warsaw ghetto from 1940-1943, Stefan Klemp has focused on a number of individuals that appear to have killed on their own initiative.¹¹¹ Klemp has looked at the biographies of some of the battalion and company commanders and argues that these were *Exzeßtäter*, men that were “convinced perpetrators” or psychopaths or both.¹¹² These men, according to Klemp, were already fanatical Nazis in the 1930s and some had violent pasts. Therefore the war merely gave them the opportunity to do what they had been ready to do for a long time.¹¹³ Klemp argues that the officers of the police battalions were not the “*Fußvolk*” of the Final Solution or “ordinary men”. For Klemp, the personalities of the individuals play an important role, the institutional factors and situational context merely provided the opportunity for these men to kill. Klemp has shown that there were some men in the officer ranks that fit Browning’s revised argument of the existence of a “nucleus” of motivated perpetrators that may have had a disproportionate influence. Klemp’s focus on the behaviour of the guard battalions of the Warsaw ghetto is revealing in that, although the battalions were not required to carry out mass executions, the situation provided the opportunity for individuals so inclined to murder without orders to do so. It would appear unlikely that those who took advantage of the opportunity at Warsaw would not have been at the forefront of the mass killings elsewhere. However, it remains unclear how representative these few *Exzeßtäter* were of the officer corps of the police battalions and how these men influenced the sustained mass murder actions that required the involvement of larger groups. Klemp’s explanation offers little in the way of organisational and situational patterns, other than the fact that many of the higher officer ranks in the police battalions were filled by career Nazis.

Junior Officers

There have been a few recent indications in the literature that there was a younger, lower-level officer cohort that may have been more ideologically driven than the average German soldier. Evidence has been presented on the Wehrmacht that soldiers aged 21-25 who had become front-line officers from the late-1930s “were more inclined than older, higher-ranking officers to accept the National Socialist worldview”.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Stefan Klemp, *Vernichtung. Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei und der Judenmord im Warschauer Ghetto 1940-43* (Münster: Prospero Verlag, 2013).

¹¹² Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.12.

¹¹³ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, pp.44 and 227.

¹¹⁴ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.220.

An overlooked part of Bartov's early work on the Wehrmacht is that on the role of these junior officers.¹¹⁵ Bartov found that these young men played a significant role in the actions of the perpetrators of the Wehrmacht on the ground. The junior officers not only served as the connecting link between the order givers of Wehrmacht High Command and the rank and file, but also had the role of ideological instructors and were responsible for the conduct of the men under their command.¹¹⁶ In *Soldaten*, Neitzel and Welzer cited the work of a researcher who investigated the conversations between 621 captured German soldiers. Alexander Hörkens found that the vast majority of this number demonstrated a negative attitude towards Nazi racial policies and that only 30 of these could be described as "ideological warriors". Significantly, the majority of the 30 were junior officers.¹¹⁷ On Einsatzgruppe D, Angrick has shown that the 90 recent graduates of the SD training school were selected to form the real backbone of the unit and were to act as the commanders in the field with direct contact with the lower-ranking personnel while the higher leaders remained hierarchically remote. In practice, Angrick notes, these were the men who were designated to be the future leaders of the RSHA.¹¹⁸ The role of this young cadre of perpetrators on the killing process on the ground has not been fully considered in relation to the police battalions.

Conclusion

The literature on the involvement of the police battalions has clearly shown the Orpo to be one of the prime agencies involved in Nazi racial policies generally including the mass murder of Eastern European Jews. However, arguments revolving around the mechanisms and motivations that directed the actions of these units in the literature on these battalions as has emerged within the broader body of literature on the "direct" perpetrators remain contested. Following Browning's influential study and reinforced by the studies from the field of social psychology, it appears to be universally accepted by scholars studying the lower-level perpetrators that the vast majority of these men were "ordinary" in the sense that they were not sadists or innately predisposed to violent behaviour. However, the extent to which the men of Battalion 101 should be considered ordinary or as representatives of the mass of "grass roots" perpetrators of the Holocaust has been disputed. In the aftermath of the debate sparked by Browning's and Goldhagen's polarised positions, Ideological considerations appear to be back in the foreground of historical discourse on the actions of the perpetrators. Studies such as those discussed by Welzer, Rossino, Koonz, Kühne and Wildt have highlighted the importance of the inter-war period and in particular the Nazi period from 1933 as

¹¹⁵ Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941-45, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

¹¹⁶ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, p.40.

¹¹⁷ Neitzel and Welzer, *Soldaten*, p.234.

¹¹⁸ Angrick, 'Einsatzgruppe D', p.80.

having a widespread radicalising effect on the German population. Collectively these studies challenge the assumptions that the perpetrators were acting within an “ordinary” ethical and moral compass and instead outline a widespread influence of Nazi ideology within German society; ideas that the later perpetrators of mass murder carried with them into Eastern Europe. Bartov and Westermann also highlight the influence of pre-war Nazi propaganda on the young soldiers and policemen involved in the mass murders, but place rather more emphasis on the importance of institutionally organised ideological training. There remains however no consensus on the relative importance of ideology on the actions of the perpetrators. The study by Neitzel and Welzer represents a recent challenge to arguments that privilege ideology, but their source sample relates primarily to the Wehrmacht and it remains unclear how representative their views are for the SS and Orpo units. Arguments raised by Wildt, Kühne and Koonz, among others, who attribute the actions of the perpetrators to a widespread acceptance of Nazi racial ideology by German society as a whole, extend “agency” to an extent that the roles of individual perpetrators disappear within the power of “collective trajectories” or values in the same way that they disappear within explanations revolving around institutional structures.¹¹⁹ Arguments such as those put forward by Westermann on the organisational structure and culture of the German police and those such as Browning’s in *Ordinary Men* on situational dynamics also, in different ways, subsume the individual agents within overriding explanations that seek to explain the actions of larger groups. Considering the complex and heterogeneous picture of the perpetrators and their motivations that has emerged from the literature, advances appear to be made in explanatory models that transcend the “classic dichotomies” of ordinary men versus ideological warriors, structures and group dynamics versus ideologically driven agents, and central versus peripheral agency.¹²⁰ Westermann’s melding of the organisational structures of the police with ideological prerogatives, Matthäus’ work on police training that may provide links between prior prejudices, organisational structure, Nazi ideology and the actual experiences of the policemen in the “East”, and his work on connecting central policies with peripheral initiatives represent some of the more important recent advances in our understanding of the roles and actions of the police battalions. There are still some aspects that have been raised in the literature but appear to require more work. The actual effects of the police training on their actions remain, according to Matthäus, unclear. Also, the notion of “grass roots”, “vanguard” perpetrators and their disproportionate influence on the killing process on the ground has not been sufficiently developed. Aside from Wildt’s study on the RSHA leadership core, very little systematic work has been done in this vein on the lower-level, vanguard perpetrators. Arguments

¹¹⁹ Mark Roseman, ‘The Lives of Others’, p.446.

¹²⁰ Longerich, cited in Szejnmann, ‘Perpetrators of the Holocaust’, p.47.

such as those presented by Beorn on a Wehrmacht signals company and Browning and Haberer on gendarmerie units, have emanated from case studies of smaller groups, but have not been sufficiently explored in relation to the actions of the police battalions. Angrick has shown that Einsatzgruppe D was, as a whole, a heterogeneous unit, but insufficient attention has been paid to the biographical differentiation within the ranks of the police battalions. A contribution to the existing literature on the perpetrators will be made in two ways. First, this study will add to the growing catalogue of perpetrators two units, Police Battalions 314 and 304, that were at the forefront of the mass murders, the background and actions of which are yet to be systematically analysed. The second contribution will be to transcend the still dominant dichotomy of “ordinary men” or “ideological warriors” of homogenous units and follow up empirically the indications that there were individuals amongst the perpetrator groups that had a significant influence by identifying a particular group of vanguard perpetrators within the battalions. The main group in focus will be the cadre of junior officers that were fast-tracked into command positions and their actions as individuals and influence and roles as a group within Battalions 314 and 304.

Research Methodology

This study will investigate the subject group of junior officers in Police Battalions 314 and 304 by looking at their biographical profiles, training and their projected role in the police ranks as well as their actions in Poland and Ukraine. In order to test the hypothesis presented above concerning the role played by junior officers this study will attempt to answer the following research questions: Who were the vanguard perpetrators of the police battalions and what role did they play in the process of mass murder in Eastern Europe? How were the junior officers prepared for their role and what experiences preceded their involvement in mass killing? How did they influence the killing process on the ground? Were these men “normal” representatives of German society or a radicalised minority? These are all questions that have emerged from the existing literature on the perpetrators of the Holocaust and will be taken to the primary sources that will be employed for this study.

The first question of who the vanguard perpetrators were forms the primary question of this study. This question has emanated from some of the more recent work on the perpetrators that indicates that there was a group of individuals within the units that had a disproportionate influence. However, it remains unclear who these men were. This study will examine whether differences between the vanguard group and the rest of the policemen of the battalions can be identified. Angrick has shown, that Einsatzgruppe D was a biographically heterogeneous group as well as being

operationally diffuse. The police battalions appear to have been organised structurally in a similar fashion to the Einsatzgruppen. This is particularly important when considering the division of labour that was employed at the sites of the mass killings as not every participant was required to perform the same tasks or even necessarily be present at the killing site; a method that would necessarily revolve around operationally designated roles as well as bringing the more enthusiastic contributors to the fore. This study will attempt to follow Wildt's call for further differentiation between the perpetrators by identifying differences of the personnel within the battalions biographically and according to position and role. The question regarding the prior experiences of the junior officer group will be answered by looking at their biographical background and the training they received before joining the battalions in comparison with the other members of the battalions. Matthäus' work on the training of the Orpo has explored possibilities of linking Nazi ideological prerogatives within an organisational setting and with the experiences (as perceived by the perpetrators) and actions of the perpetrators on the ground. This study will analyse the personal criteria that was used in the selection of the group in focus for their positions and the training they received in preparation for their projected roles. An attempt will be made to distinguish the training received by the young officers and the rank and file and I will explore the link between this specialised training and the actual roles they ended up playing after deployment. The final question of how this vanguard group actually influenced the killings will follow Matthäus' argument that there was scope for initiative all the way down the hierarchy. This study will examine the extent to which this was actually the case with the company and platoon leaders of the police battalions and how the actions of these individuals influenced the actions of others involved in the mass murders including and beyond being at the forefront of the murder actions.

These questions were shaped by issues raised by the secondary literature and will be taken to the primary sources, but the primary focus of the study has been moulded by the primary sources themselves. Police Battalions 314 and 304 were selected as case studies primarily because they had not yet been studied in any depth and there appeared to be sufficient material in the form of the trial documents on which to base an in-depth study on each. As regular battalions, they represent the significant majority of the police battalions involved at the forefront of the mass murders in Eastern Europe rather than the reserve battalions that formed a minority of the battalions involved in these activities. Also both units were involved in carrying out Nazi racial policies in Poland in 1940 and 1941 before being deployed in Ukraine and then being involved in the early mass murders following the invasion of the Soviet Union. Rossino and Mallmann have demonstrated that Poland before June 1941 was a radicalising period that was experienced by many of the police battalions before being sent into the Soviet Union. In these two ways these battalions can be seen as

representative with respect to the formation and experiences of the battalions that were involved in the mass murders of 1941 and 1942, which opens up the possibility that some conclusions that can be drawn from the study of these two case studies may be relevant for a wider grouping of perpetrator units. Following examination of the documents collected for the post-war trials of some of the former members of the battalions it became clear that many of the men that filled the lower-level officer positions within the battalions formed a strikingly homogeneous group as far as age, education and social background were concerned. Additionally, it became apparent that nearly all of this group attended the same police officer training school in Berlin over a span of two years before joining the battalions as officers. It also became clear that whilst in Poland and then Ukraine, both battalions very rarely travelled or operated as whole groups. Many of the movements and activities were performed in sub-groups; either at company or platoon strength that brought the young officer group to the fore in command positions. These factors indicated that these were distinct sub-groups which means they warrant closer inspection as groups within the larger battalion units.

This study will be based methodologically on the model provided by Wildt and his study of the RSHA leadership. In *An Uncompromising Generation*, Wildt argues that the future of perpetrator research should be guided by further differentiation and analysis between actors and institutions, intention and structural conditions, including the dynamics of situational violence rather than a “single, predominant perpetrator type”. Wildt employs a collective biographical approach, but also examines the connection between the subject actors, their institution and their practices during the war.¹²¹

This study will also take a collective biographical approach in an attempt to interpret the generational dimensions of the group and to determine the characteristics of the group through an analysis of the individuals and their experiences, although with a much smaller sample than the one used by Wildt.¹²² The sample for this study will be confined to the twelve junior officers that were part of the two police battalions that form the subject of this study. The collection of a larger and more representative sample would necessitate the thorough examination of documents on additional police battalions, which is beyond the scope of a doctoral thesis. So rather than expand the sample size, this study will attempt to compensate by a more thorough investigation of the roles and actions of this smaller group within the context of the structure and dynamics of their units. Methodologically, this decision follows the trend within Holocaust studies on the use of survivor testimony where the emphasis has moved more towards the use of smaller samples with an

¹²¹ Wildt, *Generation*, pp.8-18.

¹²² Hilary Earl, *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945-1958. Atrocity, Law, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.15.

emphasis on representation and statistically “reliable data”.¹²³ There appears to be two further methodological issues regarding the employment of a biographical approach to the study of the police battalions. First, outside of the Nazi leadership the available biographical data is often limited, and generally appears to become more limited as the focus shifts further down the hierarchy. This is the case with the rank and file of the police battalions, most of whom came from the lower classes and, as a perpetrator group, were the least likely to be the subject of post-war trials.¹²⁴ It appears to be really only possible to collect biographical data for a representative selection of the battalions as whole groups and this data, as used by Browning, Westermann and Mallmann, seems to be confined to age, place of birth and level of NSDAP affiliations. From this data alone it is very difficult for a historian to determine whether the majority were “ideological warriors”, “ordinary Germans” or “ordinary men”. However, further differentiation between the groups that made up the battalions shows a much more heterogeneous character than these labels imply. By focusing more narrowly on one of these groups, the individuals of this sub-group become more amplified and their roles and actions can be seen more clearly and can be compared with the other groups within the battalions, thus providing a more intrinsic examination of the internal dynamics and actions of the entire unit. The biographical data on the subject group for this study is also much richer than that of the rest of the groups that formed Battalions 314 and 304, mainly due to the fact that a larger proportion from the officer ranks became the subject of post-war trials than the rank and file and there are many Orpo personnel files from the officer corps held in the Bundesarchiv. There are potential problems with this and care needs to be taken that the roles and impact of the individuals that were the subject of post-war trials are not magnified purely because they were the focus of the proceedings.

Second, there appears to be a dominant notion that the “direct” perpetrators were acting purely within the context of orders and groups and, partly because of this notion, they remain the least researched group of Nazi perpetrators.¹²⁵ Mark Roseman is sceptical of the value of a biographical approach, particularly regarding the study of the lower-level perpetrator groups. These “grass roots” studies tend not to be written as biographies as the focus of interest is on the actions of larger groups rather than particular individual actors. Roseman argues that because the perpetrators at this level are following orders rather than formulating them, they are not the “makers of their own destiny”.¹²⁶ If there appears to be a level of generational, social and career homogeneity among the

¹²³ Tony Kushner, ‘Saul Friedländer, Holocaust Historiography and the Use of Testimony’, in Christian Wiese and Paul Betts (eds.), *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination. Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies* (London: Continuum, 2010), p.70.

¹²⁴ Szejnmann, ‘Perpetrators of the Holocaust’, p.46.

¹²⁵ Peter Longerich, ‘Holocaust Perpetrators’ (conference paper presented at “Perpetrator Research in a Global Context”, Berlin, Jan 27-29. 2009).

¹²⁶ Roseman, ‘The Lives of Others’, p.446.

order givers, such as the HSSPFs, camp leaders and leadership corps of the RSHA, it has been stated that among the order receivers of the police battalions no particular generational or social type can be identified.¹²⁷ The individuals that formed the lower ranks of the police battalions seem to disappear within arguments focused on the immediate, violent situational context and the attractions of comradeship, brutalisation through the experiences of a “war of annihilation”, widespread and long-term ideological dispositions and organisational structures. The position that the perpetrators at this level were merely “order receivers” has been challenged by Matthäus’ arguments that initiative could, and was, taken by individuals all the way down the hierarchy of the German police. Part of the purpose of this study is to test Matthäus’ findings by looking more closely at a group of individuals at the lower-level of the command structure to see how much scope for initiative these individuals were actually afforded. In this vein, a biographical approach appears to be warranted. The merit of biography resides primarily in that the perpetrators are accorded agency; actors are depicted as being aware of their actions, with options and even scope for initiative, rather than merely functionaries of faceless structures or the subjects of situational dynamics that erode the autonomy of individuals.¹²⁸ The focus of this study is on a specific group that can be biographically distinguished from the other generational groups that made up the battalions, but can also be distinguished from the other policemen by their position and role within the organisation. In considering the wide range of motivational factors thus far identified by the literature on perpetrators, a biographical analysis of these men in isolation would not be sufficient and needs to be melded with other factors. A similar position to Wildt’s has been taken by Peter Longerich who has stated that one-dimensional explanations revolving around either structure or agency are lacking in explaining perpetrator participation, and argues that the perpetrators who carry out genocidal policy depend on structures, however, the structures themselves can only function according to human participation.¹²⁹ In the same vein, the actions of the individuals and the organisation has to be considered in combination with the radicalising effects of the situational context. This can only be achieved by attempting to provide as “thick” a description of events as possible and assessing the motives of an individual by looking at their behaviour on the ground. This necessitates a closer analysis of the actions and roles of individuals in the killing actions, but will also attempt to recreate the broader actions, experiences and dynamics of the perpetrator groups beyond the violent moments. Following Wildt, this study will attempt to incorporate a biographical approach with an analysis of structural and contextual factors. In summary, a biographical approach can highlight the individual agents that too often disappear from accounts that focus on broader overriding influences

¹²⁷ Paul, *Täter*, p.62.

¹²⁸ Longerich, ‘Holocaust Perpetrators’.

¹²⁹ Longerich, cited in Szejnmann, ‘Perpetrators of the Holocaust’, p.31.

such as widespread ideology, institutional structures and group dynamics. What this study will show through this method is that the police battalions were not just mechanised organisations, but were comprised of different groups; operationally, they were not always acting as full units and the thesis will show that there were some individuals who formed a “vanguard” group of perpetrators at the lower levels of the Nazi hierarchies and who had a disproportionate influence on events.

Collectively, the core subjects of this study, the junior officers, formed a homogenous group that was intended to act as a vanguard group within the battalions in key positions and proved themselves to be so in the field. A biographical approach, melded with considerations of the organisational and situational influences, is necessary in order to show these factors.

This study is based primarily on the trial records held in German archives of trials held in East and West Germany on former members of Battalions 314 and 304. Studies that investigate the perpetrators involved in the bureaucratic and administrative aspects of the Holocaust can rely more heavily on contemporary documents produced by the perpetrators themselves. However, as Browning has argued, research on the massacres and ghetto clearings committed by units like the police battalions, units and perpetrators who appear to have left little in the way of a paper trail concerning these actions, has little alternative but to use post-war testimony produced for trial purposes.¹³⁰

The defendants in the West German post-war trials sat accused of regular murder as defined by the German Penal Code of 1871, a code that was in place throughout the Nazi period. Rebecca Wittmann has argued that this penal code was inadequate for the prosecution of Nazi crimes because it was hampered by the legal interpretations that were used. First, for the murder charge, the prosecution had to prove elements of intent, which tended to revolve around proving the existence of “base motives”; usually defined in these cases as racial hatred. Second, the code distinguished between perpetrators and accomplices. The state would therefore have to prove that the defendant had acted with individual initiative to be convicted of murder.¹³¹ Therefore, if it could be shown that the defendant held ill-will towards the victims or if he intended to kill them, he would receive a much harsher punishment than an “accomplice” who was merely following orders.¹³² The inadequacies of the Penal Code in combination with the absence of reliable witnesses and archival documentation left the defendants more confident of getting away with denial and distortion of the

¹³⁰ Browning, *Collected Memories. Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p.39.

¹³¹ Rebecca Wittmann, ‘Tainted Law. The West German Judiciary and the Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals’, in Patricia Haberer and Jürgen Matthäus (eds.), *Atrocities on trial: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Prosecuting War Crimes* (Washington: USHMM, 2008), pp.211-15.

¹³² Earl, *Nuremberg*, p.146.

facts.¹³³ Earl has identified the five most common justifications used by defendants: the “superior orders” defence; “military necessity” with regards to the defence of a third party (for example, the German Reich); “personal necessity”, that they themselves would be severely punished or executed; that their actions were “legal”, that the victims were guilty of crimes such as theft, sabotage or of being a partisan; “futility and powerlessness”, to refuse to kill was futile as it couldn’t stop the process anyway.¹³⁴ In addition to these excuses, the prosecution would have to prove that the individual was actually present at the time and at the place of the crime and appear to have spent a lot of time attempting to prove that the defendant wasn’t at home on leave, or in the sick bay or kitchen.¹³⁵ There are also problems for the historian with the use of trial records produced by proceedings against former Nazis in the GDR. Like in West Germany, the East German judiciary turned to the code of 1871, but unlike West Germany, also applied, usually in high-profile cases, the UN statute on war crimes and crimes against humanity.¹³⁶ In an essay on the post-war trials held in East Germany, Lower has shown that the investigators clearly applied far greater pressure on those being investigated, used Stasi methods (and the Stasi themselves) for collecting material and held significant sway in determining the verdicts, but in the process extracted more information and produced richer, detailed confessions.¹³⁷ Differences in prosecution are evident in the various trials of former members of Battalion 304 where the Soviets and GDR judiciary imposed harsh penalties on a number of former battalion members. From 1945 to 1948, a total of 107 former members of 304 were tried and prosecuted by the Soviets; two were sentenced to death. From 1975, eight former battalion members were sentenced by East German prosecutors; five of these received a life sentence.¹³⁸ In contrast the first West German prosecution of a former officer of Battalion 304 by the Staatsanwaltschaft Dortmund closed proceedings after a year stating “it cannot be certain that Police Battalion 304 or the accused as a member of this Battalion participated in any way in the killing of Jews or other actions against the Jews in the East”.¹³⁹ However, care must still be taken in analysing the East German trial records. Although the trials may appear to have produced richer testimony and documentation, as Lower has stated, often the trials only included witnesses who were likely to support a verdict that had already been made during the pre-trial investigations.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Jürgen Matthäus, “‘No Ordinary Criminal’”. Georg Heuser, Other Mass Murderers, and West German Justice’, in Haberer and Matthäus (eds.), *Atrocities on Trial*, p.204.

¹³⁴ Earl, *Nuremberg*, pp.142-44.

¹³⁵ Earl, *Nuremberg*, p.95.

¹³⁶ Lower, ‘Male and Female’, pp.62-4.

¹³⁷ Lower, ‘Male and Female’, pp.62-5.

¹³⁸ Stefan Klemp, “*Nicht Ermittelt*”. *Polizeibataillone und die Nachkriegsjustiz-Ein Handbuch* (Essen: Klartext, 2005), p.241.

¹³⁹ Klemp, “*Nicht Ermittelt*”, pp.240-1.

¹⁴⁰ Lower, ‘Male and Female’, p.73.

There are significant problems in using these trial documents for historical purposes, particularly when focusing on the motivation of the perpetrators: many of the statements used for the trials came from the perpetrators themselves and the interrogators were not trying to produce a work of history. In *Ordinary Men*, Browning states that the prosecutors of the cases against former members of Battalion 101 asked questions relevant to their tasks of collecting evidence for connecting particular people with particular crimes, but “did not systematically investigate the broader, often more impressionistic and subjective facets of the policeman’s experience”.¹⁴¹ Haberer and Matthäus on the use of post-war trials for the historian have stated that generally, “the rule applies that the reliability of perpetrator testimony is greatest the further it is removed from the issue of personal guilt and the more it can be scrutinised against the background of other sources, such as witness testimonies, diaries, letters, or other wartime writings, rare as they are”.¹⁴² Clearly affidavits by the accused are problematic sources, so an analysis of the movements, actions and dynamics of the battalions should be based more on the witness statements accrued throughout the trial. Witness statements by non-battalion members appear to be generally more desirable as sources, but are fewer. The fact that some of the men that formed the group of junior officers that are the focus of this study were the subject of trials means that there is more evidence in the trial documents on these men than most of the other former battalion members. This is helpful for the reconstruction of their personal profiles and their roles within the units. However, care needs to be taken in order not to over-emphasise their influence on the actions of the other perpetrators. The aim of the trials was to establish personal guilt within the context of a legal framework and they tend to isolate the crimes and actions of these individuals. Therefore, although the purpose of this study is to somewhat isolate and assess the actions of a specific group, the actions of the subjects of this study should still be considered within the context of other factors, including the organisational structure of the units and the group dynamics.¹⁴³

Despite the problems with using post-war trial testimonies, historians have found them fruitful and have opened up new lines of enquiry on perpetrator motivation with studies based on these documents. Following her work on the SS-Einsatzgruppen trials, Hilary Earl has observed that even the most careful analysis of the information produced by post-war trials are unlikely to produce a definitive explanation of perpetrator behaviour regarding any particular unit or group, but they can aid in constructing reasonably complete profiles of the “men in the dock and opens up promising

¹⁴¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.xvi.

¹⁴² Patricia Haberer and Jürgen Matthäus, ‘War Crimes Trials and the Historian’, in Haberer and Matthäus (eds.), *Atrocities on Trial*, p.xxii.

¹⁴³ Haberer and Matthäus, ‘War Crimes Trials’, p.xv.

avenues of investigation”.¹⁴⁴ Constructing the profiles of the units and some individuals of the units is one of the main tasks of this study and the trial documents have proven to be very useful in this regard. However, this study also aims to reconstruct the actions, experiences and dynamics of the group and will have to make extensive use of the witness statements, most of which were provided by former battalion members, in combination with other sources in order to achieve this. Following his experiences of using trial documents, Browning outlined the tests of reliability that he felt should be used when consulting these documents and which I use for this study.

1. The “self-interest test”: a statement that appears to go against self-interest, “or when a situation where telling the truth was in [their] self-interest” merits a closer look.
2. The “vividness test”: events described with “an unusual attention to details of visual memory, the actual occurrence of those events should be seriously considered, even if [their] framing of those events, in other words, the meaning of his participation in them, should be viewed sceptically”.
3. The “possibility test”: when the “claims are not contradicted or proven impossible even in light of the more extensive documentation now available, they should not be summarily rejected”.
4. The “probability test”: when the “accounts coincide with or fit a pattern of events suggested or established by other documentation, they can be viewed not only as possible but also probable”.¹⁴⁵

The trial documents do form the main source for this study, but will be used in combination with other primary and secondary sources. In addition to recreating the movements, actions and dynamics of the units, information contained in the trial documents will also be used for creating a broader biographical outline of the units and the groups and some individuals that made up the units. Particular attention will be paid to the backgrounds of the junior officer group presented in the trial documents alongside information from personnel files where available. Some information was provided by witnesses and accused on the training they received in the police and this information will be used in collaboration with secondary material on police training, particularly by Westermann and Matthäus. Regarding the training of the junior officers, I have located a number of contemporary documents held by the Bundesarchiv on the training of aspiring officers at the Berlin-Köpenick Officer Training School. The material includes some lesson plans, material on ideological and military training as well as name lists and rules. These documents will be the main source for

¹⁴⁴ Earl, *Nuremberg*, p.137.

¹⁴⁵ Browning, *Collected Memories*, pp.11-12.

establishing the type of training this group received and for what role in the police battalions they were being prepared. The trial documents will be the main source in determining how these officers put their training into practice and regarding the movements and actions of the battalions in Poland and Ukraine. This information will be supplemented by the British Intelligence Reports, which contain reports concerning the movement and actions of the battalions and captured war documents held in the National Archive in Kew. These documents, in combination with the existing secondary work, particularly those on Ukraine in 1941 and 1942, should help to eliminate many of the gaps and inconsistencies that are evident in the trial records of the 1970s and 1980s. Wherever possible this study uses contemporary place-names and where the contemporary name differs significantly from today's spelling, the latter will appear in parentheses at the first mention.

Chapter 1. Biography

The police battalions of the Orpo were not homogenous groups in that they consisted of a number of different sub-units that carried different functions and were made up of policemen from a range of different backgrounds and age-cohorts. In order to be able to investigate how the battalions functioned over a period of time, to analyse the actions of individuals within the ranks of the battalions and identify a “vanguard” group, it will be necessary to draw on biographical profiles of the groups and individuals that made up Battalions 314 and 304. This chapter will identify and contrast the different groups that collectively formed the battalions and some individuals that occupied key positions in these units.

The sample of former policemen of Battalion 314 to be used here consists of men known to have been with the battalion in Ukraine in 1941 and are taken from the records of proceedings against former battalion members in West Germany from the 1960s to the 1980s. This sample consists of a total of 103 men: 91 from the rank and file and 12 from the officer ranks. Information beyond date of birth and place of origin for the rank and file is largely taken from 38 former battalion members who served as witnesses during the trials against former officers.¹ The information for the rank and file sample for Battalion 304 used here is taken from the trial records of proceedings against former battalion members from West and East Germany from 1945 until the late-1980s. Only information on the men who are known to have been members of the battalion in Ukraine in 1941 has been used. The sample consists of 199 former battalion members including twelve officers.² Biographical information for the officers of both battalions has been largely drawn from SS, RuSHA and Orpo personnel files held at the Bundesarchiv in Berlin.

This chapter will use the notion of age cohorts or “generations”, meaning in this case those born within particular time periods, as a tool for analysing experiences and characteristics of age groups prior to their joining the police battalions.³ Battalions 314 and 304 were made up of three main age cohorts of German males: the “front generation”, those born approximately between 1880 and 1900 who had some experience of the First World War in uniform; the “war youth generation”, born roughly from 1900 to 1914, those who experienced the war as adolescents but were not drafted,

¹ In addition to personnel files, all statistical personnel data on Police Battalion 314 is drawn from Zentrale Stelle Ludwigsburg (ZStL) AR-Z 1251/65 B162/6649 – B162/6697 [hereafter ZStL B162/6649-97] and Staatsanwaltschaft bei dem Landgericht München I 320 Js 84/74 [hereafter StA 320 Js].

² Information on Battalion 304 is taken from StA München I 120 Js 157-158/74 [hereafter StA 120 Js] and ZStL B162/26795 Schlussbericht (Final Report), 1988 [hereafter ZStL B162/26795].

³ Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.7.

and the cohort Mary Fulbrook has called the “first Hitler Youth generation”, those born from 1915 to 1922.⁴ Fulbrook has argued convincingly that the Third Reich was led by self-proclaimed members of the “front generation”, was largely “carried” by the “war youth generation” and was most enthusiastically supported by the “first Hitler Youth generation”,⁵ a generation that has been called a “genuinely homogenous generation”.⁶ From this generational perspective, Battalions 304 and 314 represent microcosms of male Nazi cadres. Both battalions were led by commanders that belonged to a “front generation”, the rank and file were formed of all three age cohorts but overwhelmingly the “war youth generation” and, as will be argued here, were enthusiastically led on the ground by a cohort of junior officers from the “first Hitler Youth generation”. In conjunction with the use of general age cohorts, where possible this chapter will examine the social and political backgrounds of individuals and small cadres.

This chapter will outline the background and formation of the two battalions and will closely analyse who made up the officer ranks and the rank and file. The main focus of this chapter will be on the group of junior officers; the 2nd and 1st lieutenants that led the companies and platoons of the police battalions formed from the “social elite” of the “first Hitler Youth generation”, a group that will be argued formed a “vanguard” group of perpetrators. The data presented here will be drawn on throughout the study when examining the types of training received by members of the battalions and the actions and experiences of the policemen in Poland and Ukraine. It is the contention of this study that not all members of the battalions received the same training or were expected to perform the same roles while in Poland and Ukraine. The biographical profiles presented in this chapter will be drawn on in order to identify patterns of behaviour exhibited by certain distinct groups and individuals.

The “300-Level” Battalions

From 1933 militarised and barracked state police, *Kasernierte Landespolizei (Lapo)*, were formed which were trained and equipped as infantry formations. With the introduction of conscription in March 1935 and the expansion of the army, the majority of the *Lapo* (approximately 60,000) were drafted directly into the army as well-trained and disciplined soldiers.⁷ These losses to the Orpo

⁴ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, pp.7-12. Richard Bessel, ‘The “Front Generation” and the Politics of Weimar Germany’, in Mark Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict. Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany 1770-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.126.

⁵ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.12.

⁶ Dagmar Reese, ‘The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy’, in Roseman (ed.), *Generations*, p.237.

⁷ The National Archives, London, War Office (WO) 208/2949. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), Evaluation and Dissemination Section, ‘German Police History and Organisation Part 1’, [hereafter NA WO], pp.2 and 18.

were compounded by a further loss of 8,000 policemen to the army in 1939. Men born between 1901 and 1909 had been allocated to the police reserve as initially the Wehrmacht had little interest in drafting men from these age-groups. In October 1939, following the Poland campaign during which the armed police companies were deemed to have played a noteworthy role, in order to replenish the younger ranks of “active” policemen and to form a militarised police division modelled on the *Lapo*, Hitler decreed that the Orpo could recruit 26,000 undrafted volunteers. 17,000 men could be recruited from the age-groups 1909-1912 and 9,000 from 1918-1920, in addition to 6,000 “ethnic Germans”. A following decree extended the action to include the *Abiturenten* (those who had passed their high school diploma) of the age-groups 1918-1920 who were intended as aspirants for a career as an officer in the police.⁸ The recruitment was advertised through a special campaign and carried out at the local level by SS recruiting officers and local police authorities. The requirements for the volunteers were a minimum height of 1.70m, “suitability for the SS” and “political reliability”.⁹ According to a report by Daluge, only one in four of the applicants fulfilled the entry criteria; of the 160,000 applicants responding to the recruitment campaign in late-1939 and early-1940, 51,000 were enrolled, but only approximately 7,100 from the older age group and about 6,000 from 1918-20 were enrolled as “fit for police duty” and taken on immediately.¹⁰ The successful applicants of the “26,000-man-campaign” from the 1909-1912 cohort committed to twelve years’ service in the police after which they could be offered a permanent position as a civil servant and the successful applicants from the younger cohort were taken on for four years as police aspirants. For many of the men who applied in response to this recruitment campaign, the prospect of serving in the police rather than the army seemed to be a safer way of completing their military service.¹¹

These new recruits were combined with drafted reservists to form the new battalions which brought the total number of police battalions to 101 by mid-1940. The reserve battalions were filled with older drafted reservists from the 1901-1909 year groups and were bolstered by career policemen and pre-war volunteers who had served in the police battalions during the Poland campaign. The

⁸ Hans-Joachim Neufeldt, Jürgen Huck and Georg Tessin, *Zur Geschichte der Ordnungspolizei* (Koblenz: Schriften des Bundesarchivs, 1957), Tessin, Part II ‘Die Stäbe und Truppeneinheiten der Ordnungspolizei’, pp.13-15. See also Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.5. Wolfgang Curilla, *Die Deutsche Ordnungspolizei und der Holocaust im Baltikum und in Weissrussland 1941-1944* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006) pp.57-8.

⁹ Tessin, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.14. Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.920. Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.186.

¹⁰ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.186 (note 41). See also Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.920.

¹¹ Tessin, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.14. Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.5. Bernhard R. Kroener, ‘Part III. The Manpower Resources of the Third Reich in the Area of Conflict between Wehrmacht, Bureaucracy, and War Economy, 1939-1942’, in Bernhard R. Kroener, Rolf-Dieter Müller, Hans Umbreit (eds.), *Germany and the Second World War: Volume V. Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp.954-55.

new “elite” formations were formed with career policemen and the volunteers from the recruiting campaign. These particular units were numbered 251-256 and 301-325.¹² Most of the “200-level” battalions were deployed in Norway and the “300-level” split between the GG and Protectorate in 1940. It was the 300-level battalions, called the *Wachtmeister Bataillons*, which were to play the major role in the areas formerly of the Soviet Union in 1941.¹³

The 300-level battalions were initially formed as *Ausbildungsbataillone* (training battalions) that consisted of four companies. By the invasion of the Soviet Union each had been given a number and was reorganised into three companies. The battalions consisted of a total of approximately 540 men, divided into a battalion staff, signals unit, a transportation department (*K-Staffel*) and three companies of approximately 140 men each. For example, Police Battalion 322, formerly “Ausbildungsbataillon Wien-Kagram” entered the central sector of the Soviet Union with a battalion staff, signals platoon, *K-Staffel* and three companies: totalling 544 men, divided into 12 officers, a battalion doctor, 5 administrative staff, 101 NCOs and 425 ordinary ranks.¹⁴ This also appears to have been approximately the composition of Battalions 314 and 304. In total, the Orpo entered the Soviet Union with 23 battalions which by the end of 1941 had increased to 26. Of the 23 battalions that started the war, five were made up of experienced policemen, seven of older reservists and eleven consisted mainly of the younger recruits from the 26,000-man-campaign of 1939. Of the nine police battalions placed directly at the disposal of the three HSSPFs (those battalions not assigned to the army security divisions), seven were 300-level.¹⁵

The rank and file of Battalions 314 and 304

The rank and file of the 300-level battalions were younger than the middle-aged reservists who filled the reserve battalions and appear to have been recruited more selectively. The average age of the rank and file of Battalion 314 in 1941 was 32 years old, with the majority coming from the 1909-12 year groups representing for the most part the volunteers from the recruiting campaign of 1939-40. Most of the men were Austrian with the majority of those coming from Vienna, the home-base of

¹² Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.6.

¹³ Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.57 and p.919. There was no “private” rank in the German police. *Wachtmeister*, roughly the equivalent of Corporal, was the lowest regular rank. WO 208/2949, p.101.

¹⁴ Leonid Rein, ‘Das 322. Polizeibataillon und der Mord an den Weißrussischen Juden’, in Wolfgang Schulte (ed.), *Die Polizei im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft, 2009), p.220. On Police Battalion 322 see also Andrej Angrick and others, “Da hätte man schon ein Tagebuch führen müssen”. Das Polizeibataillon 322 und die Judenmorde im Bereich der Heeresgruppe Mitte während des Sommers und Herbstes 1941’, in Helge Grabitz, Klaus Bästlein and Johannes Tuchel (eds.), *Die Normalität des Verbrechens. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung zu den nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen. Festschrift für Wolfgang Scheffler zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Ed. Hentrich, 1994), pp.325-385.

¹⁵ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.164 and Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.186.

Battalion 314.¹⁶ The minority of men that formed the rest of the rank and file born outside of the 1909-1912 age groups are likely to have been reservists or the more experienced, career policemen who would make up the NCO positions. For Battalion 304 the average age for the men outside of the officer corps, including the battalion staff and *K-Staffel* was about 30 with again the majority coming from the 1909-12 year groups and the overwhelming majority of the company men came from the Saxony region, particularly Chemnitz, Dresden, Halle and Leipzig. Less than half of the known staff members came from this region and none of the *K-Staffel*. A former battalion member recalled that the *K-Staffel* was a self-contained unit of about 35 drivers; half of which were reservists and half career policemen, all originating from the Rhineland and Ruhr areas.¹⁷ The *K-Staffel*, therefore, was not made up of new volunteers and the staff unit appears to have been a mix of career policemen and reservists as well as some new volunteers. However, the vast majority of the men filling the three companies (and therefore the overall battalion majority), like Battalion 314, were likely to have been new volunteers recruited regionally during the 26,000-man-campaign.

Little reliable information regarding NSDAP and SS membership for the rank and file members of Battalions 314 and 304 remains in the trial records, however data for other police battalions should give an approximate idea of these affiliations. Browning has argued that NSDAP and SS membership among the 300-level battalions was higher than their reserve counterparts.¹⁸ In January 1941 a report stated that in Police Battalion 310, 219 policemen were NSDAP members. If we take the average number of men comprising a 300-level battalion to be 540 and subtract the twelve officers from the total, 39 percent of the rank and file were Party members and, according to a report in October 1941, approximately 10 percent of the men from the three companies were SS members.¹⁹ In contrast, of the rank and file in Reserve Battalion 101 (average age of 39 in 1942), only 25 percent were Party members.²⁰ Wolfgang Curilla gives the combined averages for Reserve Police Battalions 65 and 67 as 22 percent NSDAP members and six percent SS.²¹ In 1942, 22 percent of males over 18 years old living within the pre-war German borders of 1939 (excluding Memelland) were Party members,²² therefore, the percentage of NSDAP members in the reserve police battalions was similar to the national average, but the percentage for Battalion 310 was significantly higher.

¹⁶ ZStL B162/6691-6694, statements by former members of Police Battalion 314.

¹⁷ StA 120 Js, statement by Zimmermann, 1979, p.1295.

¹⁸ Browning, *Origins*, p.231.

¹⁹ For Battalion 310 see Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.220.

²⁰ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.48.

²¹ Curilla, *Baltikum*, pp.920-1.

²² Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.917.

However, the extent to which this membership rate may represent an indication of the strict selection criteria of the 26,000-man-campaign, as far as “political reliability” is concerned, is somewhat unclear as the above calculations do not distinguish between NCOs and ordinary *Wachtmeister*. The rank and file of the 300-level battalions consisted of about 430 *Wachtmeister* and about 100 NCOs; the majority of the latter were career policemen who had joined the police before the large recruiting campaign. The career progression of those policemen without an officer’s commission was, on the whole, predicated on length of service and, after 1933, NSDAP affiliations. In *Die Deutsche Polizei* (1941), Werner Best detailed the standard career of the rank and file policeman.²³ Ideally *Schupo* recruits were to be taken from the *SS-Verfügungstruppen* (SS-VT - the forerunner of the Waffen-SS) or the Wehrmacht. Before the war the recruit would have to satisfy a number of personal requirements that included: holding German citizenship; good health (wearers of glasses were rejected); be aged between 20 and 25, unmarried and at least 1.70m tall. The aspiring policeman would have to pass a physical and an intelligence test. The physical test required that the candidate could run 1,500m in under six minutes, long jump over 4.15m and throw a hand grenade 32m. Recruits from the army would have to have been a member of the NSDAP or an affiliation before their entrance into the army. Additionally, after 1936, the candidate would have to be considered suitable for membership in the SS. This meant satisfying medical examinations which were to be assessed alongside the findings of the racial experts in the RuSHA, and a further intelligence and “general knowledge” test.²⁴ The latter test seems likely to have been intended to judge the ideological fitness of the candidate.

That only one applicant in four of the 26,000 man campaign was initially deemed to have satisfied the entrance criteria indicates that some of the earlier police entry requirements were not abandoned altogether. However, it would seem very likely that the German police would have had to compromise these requirements somewhat for the purposes of replacing the loss of manpower. Many of the personal requirements were relaxed and the physical requirements would have been lowered considerably. SS-suitability, which remained a requirement for the campaign, seems likely to have been applied with a great deal more elasticity than perhaps before the war. Therefore, even if the pick of the crop from the recruitment campaign were used to form the “elite” 300-level police battalions, it seems unlikely that the new recruits could have been considered the equal of the career policemen in terms of Nazi or SS credentials and actually represented a dilution of what had become a progressively Nazified police force.

²³ Werner Best, *Die Deutsche Polizei* (Darmstadt: L.C. Wittich Verlag, 1941). It appears likely that this publication was written prior to the large-scale Orpo recruitment campaign of 1939/40.

²⁴ Best, *Deutsche Polizei*, pp.78-9. See also NA WO 208/2949, ‘German Police History’, pp.101-2.

NSDAP membership appears to have been significantly more common among the senior NCOs of the police battalions than the general rank and file. Before the war a *Wachtmeister* with a good record could be promoted to *Oberwachtmeister* (sergeant) after six years and to *Zugwachtmeister* (platoon sergeant) after seven. Following twelve years of service a policeman could be promoted to *Hauptwachtmeister* (sergeant major) and be enrolled as a permanent police official. Crucially, prior NSDAP or affiliated memberships such as with the SA or SS could be added to the length of police service making up the twelve years.²⁵ The average age of the thirteen senior NCOs who are known to have held platoon leader positions in Battalion 314 was 35 in 1941. The older of this group, especially those born in the 1890s (three of the thirteen) may well have owed their positions through length of police service, whereas the younger of the group, three of whom were born in 1913 or later, seem more likely to have experienced a rapid rise through the ranks at least in part because of their Nazi affiliations. All but one of these NCOs were Austrian, eight of whom were, like the majority of the new recruits for Battalion 314, born in Vienna.²⁶ Westermann calculated that 63 percent of the career senior NCOs in Reserve Police Battalion 101 were members of the NSDAP and twenty percent were SS members, numbers significantly higher than the rest of the rank and file.²⁷ It does not seem unlikely that it would also have been the case that the NCOs of Battalions 314 and 304 were significantly more likely to have been NSDAP, SA or SS members than the new recruits.

Most of the new recruits of Battalion 314 appear to have left manual jobs or skilled crafts in Vienna for a career in the police in 1939 and 1940.²⁸ As appears to have been the case with the NCOs, the majority of whom were also from Vienna, they came from working-class backgrounds whose formal education would not have progressed beyond the *Volksschule*. This appears to have also been the case with the rank and file that filled the companies of Battalion 304. The majority had worked in manual labour or crafts. A few had joined the police or the Wehrmacht before the war, but the majority of these were born after 1912, so were not the new police volunteers of 1940. In the post-war years, 35 percent continued careers in the police and justice services and only one former member had a managerial position. The majority were again working in manual jobs, with a significant number returning to the same jobs they had before 1940.²⁹

The post-war trial records generally provide sparse information regarding the backgrounds of the rank and file of Battalions 314 and 304. However, eight former rank and file members of Battalion 304 who were the subject of trials in the GDR in the late-1970s and 1980s provide a smaller sample

²⁵ NA WO 208/2949, 'German Police History', pp.102.

²⁶ ZStL B162/6649, list of former officers and NCOs of Police Battalion 314, 1966, pp.181-93.

²⁷ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.220.

²⁸ ZStL B162/6691-6694, statements by former members of Police Battalion 314.

²⁹ StA 120 Js, Files 5-9.

of richer information against which some of the findings highlighted above can be compared. All eight were from Saxony, six joined as part of the 26,000 man campaign and two were younger career NCOs. Seven men described their background as working-class and one as lower middle-class. Three men had been NSDAP members, one also SS and one SA prior to joining the police. Six men of eight had finished a working apprenticeship before joining the police and two of these men had experienced long periods of unemployment during the early 1930s. Two of the six men who joined as a result of the recruiting campaign stated that they joined in order to avoid going to the front and one of these also stated that he wanted to secure a civil service position for the future.³⁰

Overall then, the average policeman from the rank and file of Battalions 314 and 304 was about 31 years old, was born in Vienna or Saxony, was not formally educated beyond the *Volksschule* and had served a craftsman's apprenticeship or worked in a manual job. Unlike the NCOs, the overwhelming majority of the recruits of the 26,000 man campaign appear not to have been a Party or SS members and had reported to their respective training battalions in July 1940 for 314 or March 1940 for 304 with other young men of similar backgrounds. It appears that a significant number of the new recruits joined for career reasons.

There does appear to have been a significant level of social, educational and generational homogeneity amongst the rank-and file of Battalions 314 and 304. The majority of the men were old enough to have experienced political norms other than the Nazis as adults and were too old for the Hitler Youth. These were members of the "war youth generation", those born roughly from 1900 to 1914, who were too young to have fought during the First World War but experienced the political and economic turmoil that followed in Germany. Fulbrook has argued that this cohort "took lessons from the Great War to mean radical commitment to new ideological causes" both on the left and right of the political spectrum, forming a highly politicized "but also highly divided generation".³¹

Although it could be argued that both groups belong to a "war-youth generation", there are some differences between this group of volunteer policemen and Wildt's leadership cadre of the RSHA. The majority of the rank and file of the 300-level battalions were not old enough to have experienced the First World War as adolescents or to have experienced the dislocation of the immediate post-war years as young adults. Perhaps more relevantly, the volunteers were not the hand-picked middle-class student activists that formed the leadership corps of the RSHA. The RSHA intellectuals then, could be perhaps more precisely labelled in Mannheim's terms of a "generational unit" or sub-unit of the war-youth generation differentiated by their common social and educational

³⁰ StA 120 Js, File 10, summaries on Hoffman, Hinsche, Huster, Schumann, Melzer, Miksch, Jäger and Pöhlig.

³¹ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.8.

background.³² The men that formed the rank and file of Battalions 314 and 304 were not hand-picked in the same way as the RSHA leadership. Most of these men were younger than Wildt's group, but did not join NSDAP affiliations as youths. Most were from working-class backgrounds and may have had more leftist political leanings or prior political affiliations that did not emerge during the vetting of the recruits. Most of these men did not join because of their ideological beliefs, but would have been considered politically reliable. Overall, this is likely to have been a less homogeneous and politically active group than the RSHA leadership corps.

Senior officers

In 1941 the level of NSDAP and, amongst the regular officers, SS membership of the officer corps was considerably higher than that of the rank and file: 30 percent of regular police officers and seven percent of reserves were SS members and 65 percent of both groups were NSDAP members.³³ The officers of Battalions 314 and 304, unlike the rank and file, came from all over Germany and were drawn from all three generational cohorts.

The battalions were commanded by members of the "front generation" and former Freikorps members. Richard Bessel has argued that although the idea at the time of a "front generation" (roughly those born from 1880 to 1900, the last generation to have been socialised under the empire) coalesced around experiences of being in uniform during the war itself, there was no "typical" experience of the war. The idea of a single front generation experience "was a mythical creation of the post-war world".³⁴ Therefore, drawing conclusions for the actions and influence of individual police officers over twenty years later from the fact that they had some experience in uniform during the First World War would be problematic. However, the actions and choices made by members of this generation during the immediate post-war years, such as joining the Freikorps, should perhaps be considered stronger indications of individuals' political dispositions than the constructed image of a "front generation". It appears that a significant number of police officers in higher command positions at the level of regiment and battalion command were former Freikorps members, an indication of a common career path into the police. In a similar vein to Wildt, Bessel argues that the myth of the front generation appears actually to have been more potent in mobilising those from the war youth generation who had been adolescents during the war than those who had actually experienced the trenches in uniform. A strong indication of this is that

³² Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), pp.304-12.

³³ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.102.

³⁴ Bessel, 'Front Generation', pp.122-6.

recruitment efforts for Freikorps units and local citizens' militias were often more successful amongst recent school leavers still inspired by the image of the "heroic soldier".³⁵

The battalion commanders appear to have been all high-ranking officers who had advanced through the ranks during long careers in the police, with military experiences of the First World War and the post-war civil and border conflicts.³⁶ In 1940 the commander of Battalion 322 was 49-year old Major Nagel. Nagel was a war veteran who had joined the police in 1920, the NSDAP in 1933 and SS in 1940.³⁷ The commander of Reserve Battalion 101 shared a similar background to Nagel. Major Trapp was 53 years old in 1942, had also fought in the First World War, and was a career policeman and a Party member but not SS.³⁸ Battalion 314 had five different commanders from the founding of the battalion in March 1940 to April 1943. The first battalion commander during the formation and training period in Vienna was a Major Schmidt. Schmidt was replaced in March 1941 by a Major Kahr who was himself replaced by Oberst Willy Dressler, born in 1891, just before the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Dressler was replaced by Oberst Otto Severt, a career policeman since 1919 who was also born in 1891, in October 1941. In 1942 the battalion command was taken over by Walter Meisel, born in 1905, who had previously been the 3rd Company commander in Battalion 314.³⁹

In Chemnitz and Warsaw the battalion commander of Battalion 304 was Major Willy Nickel. Nickel was replaced in August 1941 by Major Karl Deckert.⁴⁰ The police and RuSHA personnel files of Nickel and Deckert give an idea of the type of career of the men that were appointed by Himmler and Daluge as battalion commanders. Born in 1896, Nickel was a former Freikorps member and long-time Nazi who was given an accelerated career in the police under the National Socialists. Nickel served in the German army from 1914 to 1918, was then with the Freikorps "Gerth" from January 1919 to May 1920 when he became part of the Reichswehr until he left as *Oberfeldwebel* (senior NCO rank) in 1927. Following his military career Nickel was an SA Colonel in Chemnitz, the city that would be the home base of Battalion 304. In 1935 Nickel did an officer training course and was made a police Major in 1936. In September 1941, immediately following his replacement by Deckert, Nickel was promoted to lieutenant-colonel.⁴¹ Clearly Nickel's military career would have been valued

³⁵ Bessel, 'Front Generation', pp.130-33.

³⁶ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.186.

³⁷ Rein, 'Das 322', p.220.

³⁸ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp.45-6. Browning states that Trapp was "clearly not considered SS material", which appears to have been the view of the two Battalion Captains, both of whom were SS men.

³⁹ StA 320 Js. R19/3071, Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei [HA Orpo] file Severt.

⁴⁰ StA 120 Js.

⁴¹ BAB SSO 349A, SS personnel file Nickel and BAB VBS 283 6040008158, RuSHA 'Fragebogen' form Nickel.

by the SA and the police, but the fact that Nickel was a high ranking “old fighter” and long-term SA officer would have afforded Nickel direct access into the police ranks.

Born in 1900, Karl Deckert joined the army in October 1918 but, like Himmler, was probably not sent to the front before the end of the war. After the war Deckert became part of the Freikorps “Littwitz” until June 1919 and then spent a year in the Reichswehr. From the army, Deckert joined the police in July 1920 where he received steady promotion becoming an officer in 1928, Captain in 1934 and Major in 1938. Between 1936 and 1941, immediately before his appointment as Battalion Commander of 304, Deckert was Adjutant to Hans Lammers, the head of the Reich Chancellery. During his post-war trial Deckert, as well as a few former professional and personal associates, claimed that he was by nature a military man who was an opponent of the Nazi hierarchy. However, Deckert appears to have mixed socially and professionally in high NSDAP circles. Deckert joined the Party in November 1932, at a time when police officials could join following the lifting of the prohibition of police membership in the NSDAP in summer 1932 and experienced a rapid ascension through the ranks of the police after 1933.⁴² He held a high position in the Reich Chancellery assisting Lammers and appears to have had a personal relationship with Himmler either through his position at the Chancellery or as part of the SS-Personnel Office.⁴³ Furthermore, in 1940 Deckert married the daughter of an *SA-Oberführer* and was clearly on very friendly terms with Eva Braun, as can be seen in the surviving images from Braun’s home movies at the Berghof.⁴⁴

From 1933, as they did with other branches of the civil service and sphere of German life, the Nazis attempted to purge the police of “politically unreliable” individuals. The numbers of those actually discharged from the police do not appear to have been great, in part because the bulk of the police force seem to have generally leaned politically towards the right in any case. However, the dismissals that there were created vacancies that could be filled by Nazi people. Additionally, the major loss of police personnel to the Wehrmacht in 1935 also opened up posts for long-term Nazis, especially from the *SS-VT* and General SS who were given preferences for these posts after Himmler’s take-over of the police in 1936.⁴⁵ It would appear that Nickel and Deckert, as far as their careers under the Nazis were concerned, benefitted from the purges of the police.

⁴² Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.34-6.

⁴³ StA 120 Js, Files 1 and 8. BAB SSO 138, SS personnel file Deckert. In Deckert’s SS file, it appears that he had some professional connection with the SS Main Office in 1938. BAB R 9361-III 29177, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Deckert. In a post-war statement Deckert claimed that he and Himmler were not on friendly terms.

⁴⁴ BAB SSO 138, SS personnel file Deckert. *Die geheimen Filmarchive der Eva Braun*, DVD, directed by Karl Höffkes (Essen: Polar Film and Medien GmbH, 2004). One of the photographs in Deckert’s SS-file shows him wearing exactly the same traditional Bavarian costume as in the home movies. It looks like the photo was taken at the Berghof, but this is not completely clear.

⁴⁵ NA WO 208/2949, ‘German Police History’, pp.18-19.

Two former members of the Freikorps were company commanders in Battalions 314 and 304. Theodor Wendorff, born in 1902, was until December 1941 the 2nd Company commander in Battalion 314. Wendorff had joined the German army in 1918 but it is not known if he served at the front. In 1919-1920 he joined the Freikorps "Brigade Reinhardt" led by Wilhelm Reinhardt, an antisemitic, authoritarian commander. For a period in 1920 he was part of the Berlin Brigade of the Reichswehr which was also led by Reinhardt.⁴⁶ In 1921 Wendorff joined the police and was part of the *Lapo* until 1935. However, despite Wendorff's military background and long career in the police (Wendorf was a police official from 1921 until 1963), it wasn't until 1937 that he became an officer in the police. Wendorff was not a member of the NSDAP and did not become an SS member until 1939.⁴⁷ Johann Meissner, born in 1899, was the commander of the 3rd Company of Battalion 304 in Poland and Ukraine. Meissner had served in the German army from 1917, was in the Freikorps "Iron Division" until 1920 when he joined the police. Meissner became a lieutenant in 1929, but it was not until 1940 that he was promoted to captain. Meissner did not join the NSDAP until May 1933 and did not become a member of the SS until 1940.⁴⁸ Both Wendorff and Meissner only became captains in conjunction with their entrance into the SS.

The senior officer positions in Battalions 314 and 304 were filled with men from the "front generation" who had joined the German army during the First World War (though it seems that not all had actually fought at the front) and went on to join the Freikorps. Their military experience appears to have been valued in the German police, but it is probably not a coincidence that the two company leaders, Wendorff and Meissner, did not receive the same career elevation after 1933 as the battalion commanders, Nickel and Deckert, who appear to have both been very well connected within the Nazi hierarchy.

Most of the rest of the company commander positions in Battalions 314 and 304 were taken by men of similar ages to the rank and file, of the "war youth generation", who were too young to have been members of the Freikorps. Like the other senior commanders, some appear to have risen through the ranks of the police over a long career and some were drawn from long-term members of the SA or SS. In addition to Wendorff, the other two company commanders in Battalion 304 in 1940 and 1941 were Walter Meisel (born in 1905) and Oskar Christ (1912). Unlike most of the other officers

⁴⁶ BAB SSO 236B, SS personnel file Wendorff. R19 3279, HA Orpo file Wendorff, medical record. VBS 2836065003797, RuSHA 'Fragebogen' form Wendorff. Colonel Wilhelm Reinhardt, an authoritarian commander who later became an *SS-Gruppenführer*, was known to have called the flag of the Republic a "Jew flag" and had summarily discharged soldiers known to have been sympathetic to the Republic, Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht. History, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), p.47.

⁴⁷ StA 320 Js, File 1, Wendorff's SS file, pp.37-42. ZStL B162/6693, statement by Wendorff, 1973, pp.1873-6.

⁴⁸ BAB SSO 307A, SS personnel file Meissner. BAB VBS 2836035013409, RuSHA 'Fragebogen' form Meissner.

Christ was born into a working class family and did not go to grammar school, but began an apprenticeship as a mechanic at the age of fourteen. After completing his three and a half year apprenticeship, Christ had a short term of unemployment, after which he joined the police in his home town of Wiesbaden in 1931. Christ worked his way through the ranks of the police until he was forced to resign as Police Commissioner of Wiesbaden in the late-1960s because of his trial concerning his murderous activities as part of Battalion 314. From 1935 to 1937 Christ did his military service in the army then attended a training course at the Berlin-Köpenick police officer school after which in 1939 he became a lieutenant in the police and the equivalent rank of *SS-Untersturmführer*.⁴⁹

The other two company commanders of Battalion 304 in 1940 and 1941 appear to have joined the police from the SA and the SS. Karl Hanstein (1908) joined the SA in 1929 and then the police in 1934. After attending officer school, Hanstein became a lieutenant and *SS-Untersturmführer* in January 1939 and 1st lieutenant (*SS-Obersturmführer*) in 1940.⁵⁰ Werner Mayr (1914) joined the SS at only seventeen and was one of the first SS guards at the Dachau concentration camp in April 1933. After proving himself for two years at Dachau Mayr was selected for the *SS-Junkerschule* in Braunschweig and then joined the police in 1937 after holding a position in the RuSHA. Following completion of the police officer training course at Fürstenfeldbruck in June 1938 Mayr became a police lieutenant, and five months later 1st lieutenant and *SS-Obersturmführer*.⁵¹ Clearly Hanstein and especially Mayr enjoyed a more rapid rise through the ranks than Christ because of their SA and SS affiliations. Rounding out the senior officer ranks in Battalion 304 was Dr Busse (1911), the battalion doctor. Busse was a member of the SA from 1933 and the SS from 1938 and joined Battalion 304 following his posting as *Standortarzt* at Dachau concentration camp.⁵² In 1940 with the formation of Battalions 314 and 304, all the senior officer positions were filled by SS men. Some of these men were career policemen who had worked their way through the ranks and had started their careers during the Weimar Republic; all of these men must have been considered “politically reliable” enough to have survived the Nazi purges of the police and may well have only become SS men because of the implications on their careers as police officers. About the same number of officers had become so through their earlier Nazi affiliations and benefitted from the purges; enjoying a more rapid ascension through the ranks than the career policemen. However, by the late-

⁴⁹ BAB SSO 128, SS personnel file Christ. BAB R/9361/III 26514, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Christ.

⁵⁰ BAB SSO 062A, SS personnel file Hanstein. BAB R 9361-III 66427, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Hanstein.

⁵¹ BAB SSO 304A, SS personnel file Mayr. BAB VBS 283 6035013409, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Mayr. On the early Dachau guard troops (*Wachtruppe*), see Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS. A Schooling in Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵² BAB SSO 125, SS personnel file Busse. BAB R/9361/III 25770, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Busse.

1930s and into the war years the SS and police hierarchy were filling the officer ranks with a younger, perhaps more ideologically cultivated cohort.

The junior officers of the first Hitler Youth generation

Although they hail from a different generation, the junior officers of Battalions 314 and 304 form a strikingly homogeneous group that bears more of a resemblance to the RSHA leadership corps than the other groups that made up the battalions. By the late-1930s career officers like Wendorff and Meissner and long-term Nazis such as Hanstein were not the priority type of officer for the police as Himmler and Daluge turned to youth. In 1937 Himmler announced that the future officer corps of the police would come exclusively from the new SS-officer schools and instructed his local police officials to identify suitable members of the Hitler Youth and young men who had just completed the *Abitur* (preparation exams for entrance to university) for these positions. As far as possible officers were to be drawn from the *SS-Junkerschulen* in Bad Tölz and Brunswick, but because of a high demand for SS-leaders across all agencies of the SS this proved not to be practical. It appears that candidates for the new SS officer corps would be drawn from recent *Abiturenten* who would be trained as *SS-Junkers* at the police officer schools in Berlin-Köpenick and Fürstenfeldbruck. The candidates, each of whom it would appear had been selected by local officials, was required to apply for membership to the SS before starting the training. In March 1940, Daluge ordered that concerning the immediate filling of the officer corps, a priority would be given to these graduates of the SS-Junker schools; after this group the positions would be filled by qualified professional policemen from the ranks, and lastly demobilized Wehrmacht officers.⁵³

The police battalions as militarised units were modelled on the German army. Like the army, the junior officer corps of the police battalions was drawn from the upper social and educational strata. In *Eastern Front* (1985), Bartov found that the great majority of the junior officers of the German Army in 1941 (over 65 percent) came from the middle classes; a stratum that constituted only about 25 percent of the German population.⁵⁴ Despite Hitler's intention to commission ordinary soldiers during the war regardless of social and educational backgrounds, there appears to have been a reluctance of army commanders to commission NCOs. Bartov points out that this is probably because the commanders held the view that officers in a modern army required the educational and technical qualifications that were really only achievable by those from the middle classes, therefore the junior officer ranks were mostly filled with *Abiturenten*.⁵⁵ The commissioning of officers from the

⁵³ Best, *Deutsche Polizei*, pp.80-1. NA WO 208/2949, 'German Police History', p.102. Matthäus, "Judenfrage", p.46. Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.100 and 138.

⁵⁴ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, pp.59-60.

⁵⁵ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, pp.56-66.

“*sozial erwünschte Kreise*” (socially desirable circles) followed a general inclination that dated back to before the Imperial German Army and reached a height with the Reichswehr during the Weimar Republic in which over 90 percent of junior officers were *Abiturenten*. With the enlistment of police officers, retired officers and NCOs and Austrian officers, the overall numbers of *Abiturenten* in the junior officer ranks are thought to have been reduced to about 50 percent by 1939; this number decreased further during the war. However, the number of *Abiturenten* remained exceptionally high among the youngest age-groups.⁵⁶ From the late-1930s the German police recruited from this group of young, middle-class *Abiturenten* that would fill the junior officer positions in the police battalions.

These *Abiturenten* were also part of what has been called the “best defined and most homogenous” generation, the “first Hitler Youth generation”.⁵⁷ Fulbrook has convincingly argued that this generation, those born from 1915, being “perhaps uniquely exposed to the full onslaught of Nazi propaganda”, by virtue of their age “were highly vulnerable, over-exposed [to Nazi propaganda], and hence more readily mobilized and ultimately disproportionately willing to go along with the Nazi cause”.⁵⁸ This generation, unlike its predecessors did not have adult or, as was the case for the majority of this generation, adolescent experiences of other political or social norms or developed views to draw upon that might counter-balance what it was being told everywhere; particularly in schools and as part of organised activities.⁵⁹

For those Germans born after 1915, the common major experience for most was their incorporation into the Hitler Youth (HJ) from 1933.⁶⁰ During 1933 the number of members of the HJ increased from approximately 120,000 in January to nearly 2.3 million at the end of the year; approximately 47 percent of boys aged between ten and fourteen were in the DJ and 38 percent of boys aged fourteen to eighteen in the HJ proper. By 1936 membership had increase to five million. In December 1936, the “Hitler Youth Law” heralded the incorporation of all German youth backed by increased pressure to conform and “voluntarily” enrol, but it wasn’t until two following executive orders in March 1939 when membership in the HJ became compulsory.⁶¹ Under the Nazi regime this cohort, more than any previous cohort, was exposed to homogeneous socialisation that to an extent

⁵⁶ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, pp.54-56.

⁵⁷ Roseman, ‘Introduction’, in Roseman (ed.), *Generations*, p.32.

⁵⁸ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.166.

⁵⁹ Roseman, ‘Introduction’, p.32 and Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.138.

⁶⁰ Michael H. Kater, *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.12. Alexander von Plato, ‘The Hitler Youth generation and its role in the two post-war German states’, in Roseman, *Generations*, p.210. ‘Hitler Youth’ unless otherwise stated is taken to include the *Jungvolk* (DJ - ten to fourteen year olds), and the League of German Girls (BDM).

⁶¹ Detlev Peukert, ‘Youth in the Third Reich’, in Richard Bessel (ed.), *Life in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.27-8. Gerald Rempel, *Hitler’s Children. The Hitler Youth and the SS* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p.10. Reese, ‘BDM’, pp.228 and 238 (note 3).

eroded the impact of class, gender, religion and regional differences on the youth experience.⁶² HJ members could mix with youngsters from other social milieus and individuals could rise through the ranks regardless of their class backgrounds. Furthermore, a good record in the HJ could even aid social mobility outside of the organisation, in giving access to better schools, apprenticeships or jobs.⁶³ Dagmar Reese has shown that for most girls and young women their time in the BDM, and then the Reich Labour Service (RAD) and the War Auxiliary service, was for most a liberating and exciting experience. Individual experiences, Reese argues, would of course have differed, not least due to the idiosyncrasies of each local leader, but that common elements were much stronger than the differences.⁶⁴ Based on an extensive range of surveys and oral histories, Alexander von Plato has found that the general experiences of former HJ members can be divided into three main groups: a large group who went with the flow; a medium sized group of enthusiasts and a smaller group who roundly opposed the HJ. These are at best ideal types and, as von Plato concedes, do not account for the variety of individual experiences.⁶⁵ However, regarding the former members of the HJ who went on to become officers in the police battalions, some assumptions regarding their experiences in the HJ can be made. As the individuals were locally selected by SS and police officials who probably had contact with the local HJ leaders, it seems likely that the individuals did not have bad HJ records and, given the position they were being recruited for, probably held a leadership position at some point. Also it seems likely that the individuals would have got on fairly well with the pre-military training and the ideological cultivation or they would not have volunteered for the militarised police as SS men; their experiences in the HJ seem likely to have been largely positive.

Fulbrook has argued that the Nazi system within which the HJ organisation was embedded was both dynamic in that it fostered certain kinds of behaviour including the use of violence, and constraining as it subdued others; a system of cultivation that ultimately produced and rewarded among the youth the social types it needed while simultaneously silencing the rest.⁶⁶ One mark of the success of this cultivation of youth can be seen in the ease with which a minority of the first Hitler Youth generation were mobilised to carry out the “spontaneous” street violence of the 1930s, including the thuggish violence of Kristallnacht which was carried out mainly by these cohorts. It would appear that a sizeable proportion of the young people of this period, argues Fulbrook, could be mobilised in a way that the older generations could not.⁶⁷ By the late-1930s, it was predominately the HJ

⁶² Roseman, ‘Introduction’, p.32.

⁶³ von Plato, ‘Hitler Youth’, pp.212-13.

⁶⁴ Reese, ‘BDM’, p.228-38.

⁶⁵ von Plato, ‘Hitler Youth’, pp.211-12.

⁶⁶ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.100.

⁶⁷ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, pp.137-51.

generation that were in positions charged with controlling and exercising violence towards older Germans.⁶⁸ In 1938 nearly 80 percent of *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (SS-TV) members were from the first Hitler Youth generation (year groups 1915-1922). Many of these men would form the ranks of the *Waffen-SS*, which would recruit a further 48,894 men in 1940, the majority of whom were born from 1920-1922.⁶⁹

With the introduction of *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Labour Service – RAD) and conscription into the *Wehrmacht* which both came into effect in spring 1935, membership in the HJ became a step in the model course of education “in the spirit of National Socialism” for the young males of the first Hitler Youth generation. In April 1935 following the introduction of *Wehrmacht* conscription, Werner von Blomberg announced that “Service in the *Wehrmacht* is the last and highest step in the general educational process of any young German from the home to the school, to the Hitler Youth and Labour Service”.⁷⁰ The exhaustive activities of the HJ, including weekend hikes and longer camps, which commanded so much of the youth’s time outside of school, and then the several months of labour service meant that from the mid-1930s young Germans were ever more exposed to the Nazi worldview. Those that were not fully convinced by the propaganda offerings and political lessons were constrained to a considerable extent to behave as if they were.⁷¹ By late-summer 1941, twelve of the junior officer positions in Battalions 314 and 304 were filled by young men from this first Hitler Youth generation. Of the older officers from this group that were with the battalions before summer 1941, those born between 1915 and 1917, four were members of Battalion 314 and one Battalion 304.

The 1st Company commander of Battalion 314 was Rudolf Jahnhorst, born in 1915 in Upper Silesia. His surname until 1941 was Janik, but changed it as “Jahnhorst felt more German”. Jahnhorst was in the HJ from August 1934 to March 1935, the RAD for six months in 1935 and then the *Wehrmacht* for three years during which time he became an officer candidate. Jahnhorst joined the police in 1938 as an officer candidate and graduated as lieutenant and *SS-Untersturmführer* in 1939 from the training school at Berlin-Köpenick. Jahnhorst had completed his Abitur while in the HJ.⁷² Hans Hertel, platoon leader in 1st Company and Jahnhorst’s deputy in 1941, was born in Hamburg in 1916. While at Gymnasium Hertel was in the HJ from 1933 to 1938 where he was a fellowship leader. Hertel

⁶⁸ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.137.

⁶⁹ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.136. Rempel, *Hitler’s Children*, p.208. Karin Orth, *Die Konzentrationslager-SS. Sozialstrukturelle Analysen und biographische Studien* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000).

⁷⁰ Cited in Kater, *Hitler Youth*, p.29. On the RAD following the HJ see Kater, p.57 and Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.141.

⁷¹ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.141.

⁷² ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, p.1844. BAB SSO 131A, SS personnel file Jahnhorst.

passed the Abitur in 1936. Probably because of his position as leader in the HJ, Hertel did not join the RAD and only spent eight days in the Wehrmacht before joining the police as an officer candidate. Hertel graduated from Berlin-Köpenick in December 1939 as lieutenant and SS-*Untersturmführer*. Platoon leader in the 2nd Company and deputy company commander to Wendorff was Franz Bauer, born 1917 in the Sudetenland. Bauer finished his schooling during the Abitur in 1936 and completed two years of national service in the Czech army during which time he began officer training. Bauer joined the Schupo following the annexation of the Sudetenland and in January 1941 graduated from Berlin-Köpenick. In his statement in 1973 Bauer stated that he joined the NSDAP after the officer training course because of a “völkisch attachment to Germanness”, rooted in his experience of “the oppression of the ethnic German minority in the Sudetenland”. He also said that he was “impressed by the authoritarian nature of the National Socialist state”. Bauer came to Battalion 314 in Zamość following the training course.⁷³

The two Adjutants in Battalions 314 and 304 were Karl Steinmann and Helmut Streubel, both born in 1915. Steinmann was born in Gelsenkirchen into a working-class family and did not attend grammar school and take the *Abitur*. Steinmann started his labour service in 1932, then joined the SA in 1933 at seventeen before completing a year’s military service. Steinmann worked as a glass blower for a year before joining the police as a *Wachtmeister*. Steinmann must have proven himself in the rank and file as he graduated from Berlin-Köpenick as a lieutenant and SS-*Untersturmführer* in December 1939 and joined Battalion 314 (then *Ausbildungsbataillone Wien-Strebersdorf*) in January 1940 as Adjutant. Steinmann graduated from officer school with a “satisfactory”, but was not considered by the examiners to possess the desired appearance or *Haltung* (“attitude” or “posture”) necessary for a trainer and platoon leader, so he became an adjutant instead.⁷⁴ Streubel, born in Leipzig did attend grammar school and completed his Abitur in 1934. He was in the HJ from April 1933 to July 1936 during which time he did a year in the Wehrmacht, then following a year working in the Justice Department, joined the police as an officer candidate and graduated from officer school in December 1937.⁷⁵

Name	Year	HJ	Abitur	RAD	Wehrmacht	Officer school	Battalion
Bauer	1917		1936		1936-1938 (Czech Army)	1941	314

⁷³ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.11-15. BAB SSO 040, SS personnel file Bauer. BAB R/9361-III 7414, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Bauer.

⁷⁴ BAB R19 1255, HA Orpo file Steinmann.

⁷⁵ BAB SSO 166B, SS personnel file Streubel. BAB VBS 283 6060002238, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Streubel.

Hertel	1916	1933-1938	1936		1936-1938	1939	314
Jahnhorst	1915	1934-1935	1934	1935	1935-1938	1939	314
Steinmann	1915			1932-1933	1934-1935	1939	314
Streubel	1915	1933-1936	1934		1934-1935	1937	304

From the backgrounds of these five officers we can see that all five experienced significant exposure to Nazi influence beyond that of the average German citizen during the 1930s; four officers were involved in NSDAP organisations before joining the police and Bauer was impressed by the Nazis as an “ethnic German” in the Sudetenland. Hertel, Jahnhorst and Streubel were all in the HJ into their early twenties; it is known that Hertel held a high leadership position, but it seems likely, by virtue of their advanced ages in the organisation, that Jahnhorst and Streubel did too. Steinmann was not in the HJ, though this was probably because he had left school earlier than the grammar school students and already begun an apprenticeship before 1933. However, Steinmann was in the SA from an early age. Only Jahnhorst was in the RAD. Steinmann and Streubel had both done their national service in the Wehrmacht (what von Blomberg considered the “last and highest stage” in National Socialist education) before the RAD became more or less compulsory in 1935, and Hertel appears to have held a high enough position in the HJ for his service in the RAD not to have been deemed important. All five had between one and three years’ experience in the army (Bauer in the Czechoslovakian Army), which would have been possibly the primary consideration for the recruiters of the militarised Orpo; all left the army as officer candidates except for Steinmann.

Steinmann was the only one that came from a working-class background and was not entered for the *Abitur*. Whereas the other four were fast-tracked into officer positions, Steinmann was forced to rise through the ranks. In the 1930s the academically orientated *Gymnasium* drew most of their pupils from the middle-classes, with only approximately 3 percent of pupils coming from the working-class; university education and higher social standing was not a realistic option for the majority of German adolescents.⁷⁶ Despite Nazi rhetoric on the erosion of class distinctions, the working-class was poorly represented in the officer corps of the Wehrmacht as they did not conform to long-established social and educational criteria.⁷⁷ This appears to have been much the same case for the militarised Orpo which was largely modelled on the German army. That Steinmann, although considered suitable enough for the Orpo officer corps, was considered to be lacking in “appearance and *Haltung*” suggests that his social and educational background may have had something to do with

⁷⁶ Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, p.112.

⁷⁷ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, p.64.

it. The average age of this group on their appointment as Schupo officers was 23, two years younger than the overall pre-war average of new Orpo lieutenants.⁷⁸ However, it does appear that into the war years, the officer corps of the Orpo were getting even younger and more homogenous.

The class of 1941

On 18 August 1941 72 recent graduates of the 19th Officer Training at Berlin-Köpenick were dispersed amongst the 22 police battalions that were already on former Soviet territory. Among them were Lieutenants Gerhard Panis, Hans Pütz, Wilhelm Schleich and Günter Schellwath who were sent to Battalion 314 and Lieutenants Karl Becker, Franz-Xaver Lochbrunner and Rudi Seeber who were seconded to Battalion 304.⁷⁹ At the time all seven of these lieutenants and platoon leaders were 21 years old or younger; six were born in 1919 or 1920 and one, Pütz, was born in 1922. It seems likely that the majority of the other 65 officers were from this age group.

Detlev Peukert has argued that with the 1939 laws making membership in the HJ compulsory and into the war years, the attraction of the movement and consequently the HJ organisation among the German adolescents of the late-1930s and 1940s (those born approximately between 1922 and 1932) began to decline. The disciplinary and surveillance measures employed to enforce “service” in the HJ, in which HJ patrols played a considerable role, and the increasing concentration on pre-military drill into the war years began to cultivate a general apathy and rejection among a large number of adolescents who turned in their thousands to unregimented independent gangs such as the “Edelweiss Pirates” and the “Swing Youth” whose numbers rebelled, often violently, against the regimented HJ.⁸⁰ On the whole, this trend does not appear to have been the case with the “first Hitler Youth generation”, those born earlier from 1915 to 1922 in which rebellious groups, such as the White Rose organisation in Munich, appear to have been much more exceptional. Many from the age groups 1918-1922, the group that formed the younger junior officers of the 19th officer training at Berlin-Köpenick, would have been the HJ leaders of the late-1930s that were enforcing the increasing pre-military drill and leading the HJ patrols. Unlike the slightly older group of junior officers born before 1918 such as Hertel and Jahnhorst who had experienced other political norms

⁷⁸ Best, *Deutsche Polizei*, p.81. The average pre-war age of Orpo lieutenants was 25 and 1st lieutenants 29.

⁷⁹ BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber. In Seeber's file is a copy of a *Schnellbrief* from Himmler's office in the Reich Ministry ordering the immediate transfer of the 72 officers to the police battalions already in the field in former Soviet territory. Included is a list of names of the recent graduates that indicates to which battalion they are to be sent.

⁸⁰ Peukert, 'Youth in the Third Reich', pp.25-39. See also A. Dirk Moses on the German intellectuals, the adolescents of the war years born between 1922 and 1932, which Moses argues formed a distinct “intellectual generation”, Moses, 'The Forty-fivers. A Generation between Fascism and Democracy', in Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.55-73.

as adolescents before the Nazi seizure of power, this younger group of officers had belonged to the HJ from pre-adolescence and went through school during the Nazi period.

The *Lebenslauf* of Karl Becker submitted to the SS Main Office in 1942, illustrates the kind of background of these young junior officers before joining the police battalions. Becker came from a middle-class family (his father was Regional Head of Schools) and attended a number of Gymnasien in Augsburg, passing his *Abitur* in early 1939. Becker was in the HJ from May 1933 to September 1937 and joined the NSDAP in January 1938. Becker left the HJ to join the NSKK (National Socialist Motor Corps) in which he served until April 1939 when he began his labour service. From the RAD, Becker was drafted into the Wehrmacht in September 1939, but was released after one month to study medicine at university. In February 1940 he volunteered for the Schupo and was drafted into Police Training Battalion Fürstenfeldbruck in April 1940 in which he served until September 1940 when he was ordered to the police school in Dresden-Hellerau for squad and platoon leader training course. During this period in the police he was classed as a “Police Candidate”. In February 1941 he was appointed “Officer Candidate” and from Dresden-Hellerau was sent to attend the 19th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick from which he graduated as lieutenant and *SS-Untersturmführer* on 11 July 1941. From 21 July to 22 August Becker was a platoon leader in the 1st Company München, his local police district, until dispatched to join Battalion 304 in Ukraine.⁸¹

Becker was an *Abiturient*, was in the HJ from thirteen to eighteen, became a member of the NSDAP at eighteen and was active in other Party organisations and did his military service (in Becker’s case this was cut short for university study) before volunteering for the police as a prospective officer. Becker’s background matches the ideal of the future SS and police officer corps as do the backgrounds of his Berlin-Köpenick classmates.⁸²

Name	Year	HJ	NSDAP	RAD	Wehrmacht	Police
Panis	1920	1933-1938	unknown	unknown	1938-1939	Oct 1939
Schellwath	1920	1933-1941	1938	1939	1939	Mar 1940
Schleich	1920	1933-1941	1938	1939		Feb 1940
Pütz	1922	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
Becker	1919	1933-1937	1938	1939	1939	Feb 1940

⁸¹ BAB R/9361/III 9281, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Becker.

⁸² BAB: SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis. VBS 283 6040013719, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Panis. SSO 74B, R 9361-I 3058, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Schellwath; SSO 80B, VBS 283 6050009661, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Schleich. SSO 050, R/9361/III 9281, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Becker. SSO 269A, VBS 283 6035003589, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Lochbrunner. R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber.

Lochbrunner	1919	1933-1938	1938 (SA)			Feb 1940
Seeber	1920	unknown	unknown	1939	unknown	May 1940

The only background information that could be found on Pütz was that he was part of the 19th Officer Training course and joined Battalion 314 along with Panis, Schellwath and Schleich. It appears that all members of this group came from a middle-class background and were *Abiturenten*. The above table demonstrates a number of additional similarities in the personal backgrounds of this group of junior officers. Unfortunately, it appears that little biographical information has survived about Pütz who was killed in 1942. With the exception of Pütz who was only nineteen years old when he became platoon leader in Battalion 314, all were born between September 1919 and August 1920 resembling a school year group and were only 21 years old in August 1941 when they came to their respective battalions in Ukraine.

All were in the HJ from the ages of twelve or thirteen to at least eighteen, joining in 1933, a time when membership was not compulsory. Schleich and Schellwath were still members of the HJ at the age of 21 when they finished officer training. Schellwath stated in his SS file that he held a HJ leadership position, but the length of membership indicates that Schleich too had probably reached the higher leadership ranks in the organisation.⁸³ Peukert has indicated that the HJ leaders were disproportionately from grammar school backgrounds.⁸⁴ Despite the supposed eradication of class differences in the HJ organisation, this seems likely to have been the case primarily because most other young men in their late-teens would have had less spare time outside of work or apprenticeships. That Panis, Becker and Lochbrunner remained in the HJ until their late-teens suggests that they too held leadership positions, though perhaps not as senior as Schellwath and Schleich. Lochbrunner, a teenage “political instructor” for three years in the HJ, may well have risen even further up the ranks in the HJ if had he not elected to join the SA instead.⁸⁵ Schellwath, Schleich and Becker all joined the NSDAP at the earliest opportunity, at eighteen years old. Lochbrunner joined the SA and Becker the NSKK, both straight from the HJ. In this regard, these five demonstrate a significant level of enthusiasm for Nazism at a young age. It does not appear to be the case that these young men were like the majority of their contemporaries in the HJ in more or less going with the flow, as von Plato has argued, but seem more likely to have belonged to the group of enthusiasts.

⁸³ BAB SS0 74B, R 9361-I 3058, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Schellwath.

⁸⁴ Peukert, ‘Youth in the Third Reich’, p.31.

⁸⁵ StA 120 Js, statement by Lochbrunner, 1968, pp.616-17. Klemp, “*Nicht ermittelt*”, p.243.

All appear to conform to at least some of the steps of von Blomberg's ideal path of National Socialist education: attending school after 1933; lengthy periods in the HJ; a period of service each with the RAD and of military service. The exception in this group is Lochbrunner who did not do service in either the RAD or the Wehrmacht as he was in the SA. Judging by the dates on which these men joined the police, it appears that all joined as part of the 26,000 man campaign, probably as part of the extension decree of October 1939 regarding the recruitment of *Abiturenten* from the year groups 1918-20 as prospective officers. These men were likely hand-picked by SS recruiters who probably had contact with the local HJ or SA leadership. All were given a fast tracked career in the SS and police; their starting salary, based on pre-war levels was considerably higher than that of long-serving rank and file career policemen other than the most senior NCOs.⁸⁶ All had been part of pre-military or paramilitary organisations almost continuously since the age of fourteen, and had been part of Nazi organisations since twelve or thirteen.

Like Becker all the men of this group would have spent a period of five or six months as a "Police Candidate" for basic training in a local training battalion. Following basic training all attended squad and platoon leader training at Dresden-Hellerau until February 1941 when they started officer training in Berlin.⁸⁷ Upon successful completion of the training the newly appointed SS and police *Junkers* were sent to a police administration, presumably to await their assignments: Panis, Pütz, Schleich and Schellwath were in Dusseldorf and Becker, Lochbrunner and Seeber were in Munich. Himmler's memo of 18 August 1941 ordered the immediate dispatch of these officers to Battalions 314 and 304 in Ukraine.⁸⁸

To what extent then can the junior officers of Police Battalions 314 and 304 be considered an "elite" or "vanguard" group? Roseman has argued that the Nazis managed, at least temporarily, "the trick of robbing the youth movement of its independence whilst still profiting from its elan"; the German youth in Nazi ideology as well as in their own self-perception was accorded the image of a vanguard in creating the Nazi society of the future.⁸⁹ Members of the HJ were encouraged by its leadership to regard themselves as the "young elite" of the movement. During the Nuremberg Party rally in September 1934, Baldur von Schirach the leader of the HJ gave a speech introducing Hitler stating as

⁸⁶ Best, *Die Deutsche Polizei*, pp.79-81. The pre-war salary band for a *Wachtmeister* was 1410-1980RM. For a lieutenant the salary was 2400RM and for a 1st lieutenant, 4200RM.

⁸⁷ StA 120 Js, File 8, undated memo from Himmler's office regarding the commencement of the 19th Officer Training Course at Berlin-Köpenick which contains a list of names of candidates coming from the Dresden-Hellerau training school.

⁸⁸ BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber.

⁸⁹ Roseman, 'Introduction', p.31.

much: "...our movement, whose young vanguard you are and whose standard bearers you will be..."⁹⁰

The extent to which the junior officers, having spent their adolescence in the HJ, carried this attitude with them to their roles in the police battalions is difficult to determine based on post-war character descriptions of the junior officers by their former subordinates in Battalions 314 and 304 as they are somewhat scarce in the trial records. However, among the few depictions of some of the junior officers there does seem to have been a general view of these young SS officers as a distinct group within the battalions. A driver of the 3rd Company of 314 got to know Lieutenant Panis in Ukraine as his chess partner: "Well that's the way young officers are. He was reckless, was in the SS and wanted to talk others into joining the SS. He reacted angrily to me when I did not [want to join]".⁹¹ Another member of the 3rd Company remembered that Panis had a very relaxed way of using the "German greeting", for which he was yelled at by his superior, Meisel. Generally Panis was not remembered favourably by former company members: "He was an arrogant man who came fresh from the officer school"; "Lieutenant Panis came fresh out of officer school and thought from the start that he could drive his head through the wall"; "Panis was just a young officer who wanted to become something"; "Panis was a young, jagged officer who came straight from the war school. He failed at the front however".⁹² Similar assessments were made by former battalion members on Schleich and Pütz who were also "fresh out of officer school". Like Panis, they also received the displeasure of their company commander, Wendorff, who yelled at them loudly, although Wendorff, in the opinion of one former member of Battalion 314, was the only officer who would have done so.⁹³ Bauer, slightly older than Panis, Schleich and Pütz, who had joined Battalion 314 a few months before them, received more mixed reviews from former 2nd Company men. One policeman recalled Bauer as a "modest person" who would never have acted like Schleich and Pütz. Another remembered Bauer as a "friendly man" like Wendorff. However, one former policeman remembered him in a similar light to the other young officers: "He was a young officer...was very much pro-German, was arrogant and thought he was something better than us". Wendorff recalled Bauer as being "one of those young officers, in so far as I can remember, who came from the *Ordensburg* [SS training schools] and was deeply rooted in the National Socialist ideology".⁹⁴ The description of Bauer as being "pro-German"

⁹⁰ Kater, *Hitler Youth*, pp.60 and 68.

⁹¹ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Strauch, 1975, p.2495.

⁹² ZStL B162/6695, statement by Immand, 1976, p.2518. StA 320 Js, File 1, statements by former members of Police Battalion 314, p.61.

⁹³ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Heinrich, 1974, p.2220.

⁹⁴ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Wendorff, 1976, p.2568, p.2220, p.2228, p.2439.

and ideologically driven seems reasonable as Bauer himself admitted – as we have seen – that he had a “völkisch attachment to Germanness” and was attracted by the nature of the Nazi state.

A former member of the 3rd Company of Battalion 304, described Lochbrunner (probably the policeman’s platoon leader) as being “moody” and “vain”, but recalled the older career officers in a more favourable light.⁹⁵ Generally, the much younger, recently graduated officers appear to have been considered by at least some as a distinct group and their portrayal by their former comrades’ contrast with the general portrayals of the older officers and NCOs. Platoon Sergeant Söllner of 304 was from Halle in Saxony and was known by the nickname “Sonny”. 1st Lieutenant Welsch of 304, also from Saxony was, according to one subordinate, someone “who one could talk to about everything”. NCO Walter of 314 was, like most of the rank and file in 314, from Vienna and was described as being a “genial” type.⁹⁶

The somewhat more positive depictions by former battalion members of the older, career police officers and NCOs generally appear to stand in contrast to the general depictions of the younger officers and there seems to have been a level of resentment from the former rank and file towards this group; at least as depicted in the post-war testimonies. Generally, these few largely negative descriptions of some of the junior officers portray a group that were considered arrogant with a somewhat cavalier attitude to form, ideologically driven and inexperienced. As a group they may have attempted to compensate for the fact that they were less experienced than the other officers and NCOs with ideological zeal.

The young, junior officers do stand out from the rest of the policemen as a distinct group. First, this group is considerably younger than the rest of the battalions, a fact that would have been more conspicuous because of their officer status. Second this younger group appears to have been more socially privileged, being drawn from the middle-classes, as opposed to the more working-class backgrounds of most of the rank and file, and had been educated to a higher level. Third they were drawn from the ranks of the HJ leadership and other NSDAP organisations whereas the majority of the rank and file appear to have not had these affiliations. All these factors distinguish this group from the other groups within the battalions and contributed to their receiving a fast-tracked career path enjoyed by neither the older officers nor the rank and file. The distinction is, to an extent, reflected in the post-war depictions. That these individuals had been treated as a “vanguard” from a young age and then given elite professional status in the SS and police, strongly indicates that they may well have considered themselves a youthful vanguard.

⁹⁵ StA 120 Js, statement by Asmus, 1975, pp.905-8.

⁹⁶ StA 120 Js, statement by Asmus, pp.905-8. ZStL B162/6695, statement by Heinrich, 1974, p.2220.

Conclusion

The “300-level” police battalions were heterogeneous groups as far as the generational, social and geographical backgrounds and prior political affiliations of the members are concerned. The average age of these battalions does not tell us much about the mechanisms of the groups at battalion, company or squad level. However, further generational and social differentiation of groups within the formations indicate different levels of professional experience and ideological commitment both vertically and horizontally in the command structure which provide a better view of how the battalions were structured and operated. How “elite” the 300-level battalions, compared to their reservist counterparts, actually were is not clear as it is difficult to determine quite how extensive the recruitment process was in 1939 and 1940 as far as ideological commitment was concerned. What is clear is that the officer ranks were significantly more “Nazified”, based on SS, SA and NSDAP membership than the rank and file. However, there were also marked differences in this regard within the officer ranks which included some long-term police officers who appear to have joined the SS and NSDAP for career reasons and others who were encouraged to join the police as officers precisely because of their Nazi affiliations. Clearly there was considerable overlap between these two groups. A prominent example is Deckert, the Commander of Battalion 304 who was a long-serving policeman who also appears to have been extremely well connected in the Nazi hierarchy. A distinct group within the officer ranks were the junior officers. These young men were recruited as an elite group, by virtue of their generational, political and educational backgrounds, and represented the ideal future officer corps. However, no matter how ideologically sound these men were or were perceived to be, they would still have to perform pivotal roles in a professional organisation. The training of these men in preparation for their envisaged roles will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. Role and Training

After gaining control of the uniformed police forces in 1936, Himmler sought to meld the SS and police organizations into a single structure based on a military model. The foundation of this organization would be a specific culture achieved in part through training with a particular emphasis on the cultivation of a Nazi worldview and a particular *Haltung*. To achieve these goals Himmler would not have to start from scratch. A military influence within the police institutions in Germany is evident going back to the late nineteenth-century where a large number of ex-soldiers who had been socialized for periods in the army were filling the police ranks. This situation continued after the First World War with the police recruiting from professional soldiers and conscripts as well as a large number of Freikorps members. Before 1933 German police forces were typically right-wing leaning groups with a strong martial bearing.¹ Himmler and Daluge sought to build on the prior military and political identity of the police and marry this identity with SS ethics creating a particular ideological *Haltung* that went beyond the conditioning of the police as antisemites.² From 1934 the RuSHA was instrumental in forming early guidelines for the ideological schooling of the police which, according to Daluge, was about transmitting the spirit of the SS to the police corps. In August 1938, Himmler withdrew from the RuSHA the responsibility for indoctrination and gave general responsibility to the SS Main Office. Himmler himself took a lead role in establishing a standardised “SS-like political and ideological education” that aligned the training of the Order Police with that of other SS organisations, strongly indicating his personal pedagogical preferences for a mix of disseminating knowledge, lectures and social gatherings, “not for the brain, but for the whole person and which speaks to the heart”.³ The regular indoctrination and military training which intensified with the outbreak of war, was intended to form the basis of Himmler’s planned merger of the police with the SS to form the “Corps for the Protection of State”.⁴ Therefore, by the start of the war in 1939 and with renewed vigour after the invasion of the Soviet Union, the police battalions were receiving the same indoctrination as their Security Police and SD counterparts.⁵ The training received by the newly created police battalions in 1940 and 1941 consisted of more than ideological training. Basic police and military training formed the main blocks of the general training, but these aspects were infused with ideological perspectives. The initial training for the new recruits of the 26,000-man campaign that formed the companies of the 300-level battalions played a significant role in the

¹ Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (Penguin Books: London, 2004), pp.9 and 271.

² Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.7.

³ Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, pp.35-53. Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.312.

⁴ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.186.

⁵ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.11.

creation of an organisational culture within the militarised and hierarchical structure of the battalions that set the parameters of expected and accepted behaviour of the policemen. However, it was the individuals within the organisational structures that created the culture of the platoons and companies of the police battalions and the biggest influences on the new recruits were their superiors with whom they were in direct, consistent contact. The low-level officers that led the platoons and companies, the immediate superiors of the rank and file, were in the positions that would greatly influence the culture and actions of the smaller units that made up the battalions. This chapter will demonstrate that these officers received training based on a German military model that sought not only to install a particular *Haltung*, but were trained to act as role models and the disseminators of ideological ideas to their immediate subordinates and who were actively encouraged to use the initiative that their positions within the hierarchical structure would afford them. This chapter will begin by examining the type of basic training received by the rank and file of Battalions 314 and 304 prior to their deployment in Poland. It will then examine the training of the junior officers and the nature of their intended role in the police battalions.

Basic training

The new recruits from the 26,000-man campaign arrived at the then “training battalions” in Chemnitz and Vienna in March 1940 and July 1940 respectively. Basic training lasted for six months and then the battalions were deployed in Poland. Most of the career officers and NCOs had arrived at the home bases in Chemnitz and Vienna some time before the arrival of the new recruits. Additional officers and NCOs (some from the reserves) would join the battalions after the initial training. In the case of Battalion 304, the career policemen arrived in Chemnitz in November and December 1939 and would play a role in the training of the recruits. Many of these men, some of whom were in the midst of their NCO training when the recruits arrived, came from the Saxony region, had had military experience and a number of years police experience.⁶ It is likely that, because of the Nazi penetration of the state which gave preference in career advancement to party and SS members, Nazi affiliations were higher among the career policemen carrying out the training.⁷ However, the social background of these men was also closer to that of the new recruits than the younger junior officers, most of whom would join the battalions after the initial training.

One of the career officers who took part in the initial training for Battalion 314 in Vienna was Theodor Wendorff. Wendorff, the 2nd Company commander, was recalled by many former company

⁶ StA 120 Js, statements by Karls, Schreiber, Söllner, Kusch, Becker, Hoffmann and Pöhlig.

⁷ See also Donald Bloxham, *Genocide, the World Wars and the Unweaving of Europe* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2008), p.133.

members in a positive and comradely light. Somewhat older than the average battalion member, Wendorff was remembered as being a fatherly figure who was “fair, clean and accessible” and “loved a good drink and good food”.⁸ The general portrayal of Wendorff by former members of the 2nd Company as a friendly, sociable character, is confirmed by a report in Wendorff’s SS file from August 1941. A reference included in the report provided by Major Schmidt who was the battalion commander in Vienna states that: “[Wendorff] was a caring leader to his company and they respected him. He is popular in comradely circles because of his likeable personality.” Schmidt also reviewed Wendorff’s effectiveness as a trainer: “He has good military knowledge and practical experience and was able to employ well this knowledge gained from his previous position in the educational duties that he was assigned”. However, many of the former 2nd Company members also portrayed Wendorff as “an opponent of the regime”, something that is not confirmed by the report. The report does generally refer to Wendorff’s valuable military and police experience, but an assessment of his “National Socialist Worldview” states: “Always supports the National Socialist State. He understands how to provide his subordinates with the National Socialist philosophy convincingly”.⁹ As a popular and respected officer, but also an SS-man, it is not clear how representative Wendorff is of the other officers and NCOs who were involved in the initial training in either respect. However, the report does demonstrate the significant personal role that the officers played during the initial training of the new recruits. “Worldview” training aside, Wendorff’s commander, Major Schmidt, clearly considered Wendorff’s prior military and police experience to be an asset during the basic training.

Guidelines of January 1940 issued for the training of the 300-level battalions emphasised the need for the recruits to be educated “for toughness” in order to fulfil their anticipated wartime duties and basic training was to include an introduction to police duties, physical fitness, military training and the “strengthening of character and worldview”.¹⁰ Many former policemen expressed their surprise at the minimal level of more “traditional” police training. One former member of 314 recalled that: “At that time I thought that after the training I would be assigned to a police position and allowed to perform normal police service. These ideas were not uncomfortable ones. However, already during the training I was discovering something worse”.¹¹ Another former member of 314 stated that: “Instead of the hoped for police training, we only got a military one”.¹² It may not be unreasonable to accept that the new recruits, many of whom joined the police for career reasons and to avoid

⁸ ZStL B162/6695, statements by former members of Police Battalion 314, pp.2204-2601.

⁹ StA 320 Js, Wendorff’s SS file, pp.37-8.

¹⁰ Browning, *Origins*, p.231.

¹¹ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Felbinger, 1974, p.2343.

¹² ZStL B162/6695, statement by Kalweit, 1976, p.2592.

serving at the front, were genuinely surprised at the time at the lack of training for traditional police duties. Indeed, the testimonies of former battalion members indicate that the training they received was more militarily oriented, including infantry training and special weapons training.¹³ Guidelines for the training of the *Schutzpolizei* issued in March 1940 set out what was to form the basic training of the new police battalions: four weeks were to be devoted to physical fitness and self-defence; six weeks for weapons training; two weeks for ideological training which included topics such as *Volk ohne Raum, Raum ohne Volk*, the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and the new *Reich* and its leadership; four weeks for lessons on the organisation of the police and its tasks, including the legal system and general policing; and five weeks of practical training in the field.¹⁴ These guidelines were issued around the same time as the 26,000 man campaign, so were likely to have formed the basis of the training of the 300-level battalions. Rudolf Miksch, formerly of Battalion 304, recalled that military drill, infantry tactics training including field exercises on topography and orientation, and shooting practice were undertaken daily. Sport and physical fitness were also on the daily agenda.¹⁵

Miksch also recalled that part of the “schooling” was based on ideological tenets of *Deutschtum* and the concept of a “master race”.¹⁶ Imperial traditions and popular ideals of colonial ventures had not disappeared along with Germany’s colonies after the First World War and a widespread cultural colonial imagination appears to have survived the war. Colonialism also formed an important aspect of Nazi ideology and appears to have formed a considerable part of police training leading up to the invasion of the Soviet territories.¹⁷ British intelligence officers appear to have been particularly interested in the level of colonial training for the police. An intercepted message dated 4 November 1940 stated: “RFSS – send to group commanders of all police training battalions re beginners’ courses in colonial languages”.¹⁸ In response to this message, on 8 November Police Regiment Warsaw reported an Oberleutnant (1st lieutenant) and Hauptmann (captain) of Battalion 304 for participation in the course for colonial languages.¹⁹ At that time the battalion was stationed in Warsaw as part of Police Regiment Warsaw, the Oberleutnants were Hanstein and Welsch and the

¹³ StA 120 Js, statement by Günzel, 1968, p.784, summary of Hinsche, 1977, p.1733. Summaries of Schumann, Miksch and Melzer, 1979, p.1751. ZStL B162/6690, statements by Küster, 1947, p.1237 and Hestermann, 1947, p.1271.

¹⁴ BAB R19/266, ‘Richtlinien für die Ausbildung der in die Schutzpolizei des Reiches und der Gemeinden eingestellten Polizei reservisten’, 6 March 1940, cited in Philip T. Blood, *Bandit Hunters. The SS and the Occupation of Europe* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2006), p.159.

¹⁵ Statement by Miksch, cited in Klemp, *Vernichtung*, pp.56-7.

¹⁶ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.57.

¹⁷ Smith, *Nazi Imperialism*. Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*. Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*.

¹⁸ NA Kew HW [hereafter NA HW] 16/6, Government Code and Cypher School [GCCS]: German Police Section, decrypts of German Police Communications. Periodic summaries, 1940-1945.

¹⁹ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report on war crimes committed by the German police in Russia and Ukraine from July to December 1941.

two Hauptmänner were Mayr and Meissner. The following report from mid-November 1940 indicates that the intelligence officers were trying, unsuccessfully, to establish which languages were actually being taught. "Courses are short, lasting only one month, but affect a large number of police, principally officers and NCOs. Thoroughness of organisation and many instructional centres indicate far-reaching intentions".²⁰ Colonialism appears to have been the topic of the month in November 1940. The title of the monthly theme pamphlet to be used during police ideological instruction was "Germany's right to colonies".²¹ As early as 1937 Daluge was interested in creating a colonial police force and after the victory over France, the possibilities of taking over French colonial possessions and re-claiming Germany's other lost colonies enthused some among the SS and police leadership for colonial ventures.²² However, as many historians have shown, Hitler had little interest in overseas colonies and as Donald Bloxham has convincingly argued, any focus on African colonies after the late-1930s would have been misplaced, as Hitler himself considered overseas colonies to be vulnerable during wartime.²³

It appears to be far more likely that Himmler's "far-reaching intentions" regarding colonisation would have geared the training of the police to the colonisation of Eastern Europe. It seems unlikely that the two leaders from Battalion 304 who, at the time of the course were engaged in activities in Poland, would have been sent to attend a "colonial language course" only to have served in some other area of the globe. These men, along with the other officers and NCOs who were principally affected by those courses were heavily involved in the training of the men in their units. It is far more likely that the experiences garnered during the courses were expected to be disseminated to their subordinates in preparation for their conceived tasks in Poland and the Soviet Union. It certainly appears that the anticipated roles of the police battalions in establishing German colonial rule in Eastern Europe formed a significant part of the basic training. Miksch of Battalion 304: "We were taught that only the German is able to create order in Europe and bring culture to the people...to keep and feed the ["German"] nation he needs living space".²⁴ In his post-war testimony, Miksch stated that he thought that these lessons "were not only designed to justify [the policemen's role in] a war of conquest, but mainly to make us feel like *Herrenmenschen* ourselves, that we were superior to other peoples and races and that we were meant to bring them culture and order".²⁵

²⁰ NA HW 16/1, GCCS early reports on German Police 1939-1941. Report form the period 12/11/40-18/11/40.

²¹ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.104.

²² Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.80-2.

²³ Bloxham, *Final Solution*, p.19.

²⁴ Miksch, cited in Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.57.

²⁵ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.57.

According to Miksch, the “Jewish race especially was presented to us as being inferior and Germany’s main enemy”.²⁶ According to Matthäus’ findings on police training, antisemitic issues were not prominent and may not have gone beyond the types of messages that were projected onto the general population at the time. Antisemitic views relating to political or ideological issues were present, but it is not clear how effective the attempts to create an organisational spirit around racist doctrines were following the considerable expansion of the police forces in 1940.²⁷ The effectiveness of this aspect of the training is likely to have varied greatly depending on the individual receiving and the officer dispensing it. The principle that Jews were to be treated as enemies, even if unarmed, was part of the basic police training. In September 1940 Himmler ordered that the entire SS and police were to see the film *Jud Süß* over the winter; at a time when Battalions 304 and 314 were stationed in Poland.²⁸ From the studies on the indoctrination of the police by Matthäus and Westermann, it appears that the nature of antisemitic indoctrination became more explicit in the lead up to and during the months following the invasion of the Soviet Union.²⁹ The training profile of the Orpo a few days before the invasion stated: “As long as the Jews are allowed to live among other nations and races, there will be no peace on earth...the Jew is the general world enemy number one”.³⁰ Few of the former members of Battalions 314 and 304 admitted to having received ideological preparation as part of their training during the trial processes, but it was part of the preparation of the battalions and would continue to be part of the ongoing training whilst in Poland and Ukraine.³¹

From the training guidelines issued for the basic training of the police battalions in 1940, it is clear that less time during basic training was to be devoted to ideological training than the other topics; twice as much time was to be given to “police work” than ideological education. However, training of the police battalions was to be continued in the field following basic training and it may have been the ideological sessions delivered by the junior officers in the field that most resonated with the policemen and may have stuck out in their memories after the war. The main source for monthly and supplementary daily sessions to be delivered by unit leaders in the field was the *Politischer Informationsdienst* (PID), a propaganda paper published by the Orpo “Office for Ideological Education”, which was renamed *Mitteilungsblätter für die Weltanschauliche Erziehung der*

²⁶ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.57.

²⁷ Matthäus, ‘Controlled Escalation’, pp.220-9.

²⁸ Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, pp.59-64.

²⁹ Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, p.63. Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.109.

³⁰ Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, p.63.

³¹ StA 120 Js, summaries of Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1979, p.1751. The verdicts of the District Court Halle on the defendants Schumann, Miksch and Melzer of Battalion 304 indicate that the defendants received ideological preparation during basic training.

Ordnungspolizei (MBI) in May 1941.³² The material contained in the PID and MBI covered a range of topics, including political, social, economic, military, geographical as well as racial aspects that could be used to give meaning or to justify current events.³³ For example, from May 1941 the eastern territories featured overwhelmingly in geographical articles in the MBI.³⁴ MBI articles were also explicitly antisemitic such as an article from a June 1941 issue titled “Jewry and Criminality” and in December 1941, “One War Aim: A Europe Free of Jews”.³⁵

The extent of ideological training during basic training and the general effectiveness of these “lessons” on the policemen of the battalions is difficult to establish. It would seem likely that the most effective ideological lessons were those delivered by officers in the field, perhaps drawn from the PID and MBI, as justifications for the actions of the policemen. This aspect of the role of the junior officers and the implications on the actions of the policemen will be discussed further in this and the following chapters.

Officer training

Like the structure of the Orpo units, the role of the junior officers of the police battalions were modelled on traditions of the German army. The junior officers of the German army served as the “connecting link between the high command of the Wehrmacht and the political leadership of the Reich on the one hand, and the rank and file on the other”.³⁶ Generally only *Abiturenten* would be selected as potential officers during basic recruit training. Following several months service in the ranks, the potential officer would attend a six month officer training course.³⁷ As we have seen in the previous chapter, most of the junior officers of Battalions 314 and 304 had passed the *Abitur* and spent a period in the ranks of the Orpo, including attending NCO training, before starting a six month officer training course. In addition to serving as the link between the order givers and the receivers of the rank and file, the junior officers of the army were responsible for the morale, discipline and education or training of the troops under their command in both military and ideological matters.³⁸ In his study of the junior officer corps of the Wehrmacht, Bartov concluded that the junior officers, “assisted by abundant propaganda material with which they were supplied, had a far greater

³² Karl-Heinz Heller, ‘The Reshaping and Political Conditioning of the German Ordnungspolizei, 1933-1945’ (PhD diss, University of Cincinnati, 1970), pp.59, 126 and 162-3. A similar publication, *Mitteilungen für die Truppe*, was issued to the Wehrmacht.

³³ Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.171.

³⁴ Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.187.

³⁵ Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, pp.201-4.

³⁶ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, p.40.

³⁷ Tim Ripley, *The Wehrmacht. The German Army of World War II 1939-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p.215.

³⁸ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, pp. 40 and 74.

influence upon the morale, *esprit de Corps* and ideological conviction of the troops than any outside functionaries".³⁹ The junior officer corps were trained to be able to function in the field without detailed orders, relying on a considerable level of initiative to carry out the tasks assigned by commanding officers.⁴⁰ The training of the junior officers of the police battalions appears to have been aimed at the creation of a junior officer cadre that would perform a similar role to their counterparts in the army.

From 1936 police officer training was carried out at the *Polizei Offizier-und Schutzpolizeischule* in Fürstenfeldbruck and the *Polizei Offizierschule Berlin-Köpenick*.⁴¹ The courses lasted about six months and some courses may have been split between the two schools. In Battalion 314: Jahnhorst and Christ graduated as lieutenants from Berlin-Köpenick in early 1939; Hertel and Steinmann graduated in the same class from Berlin-Köpenick in December 1939 and Bauer graduated in January 1941.⁴² In Battalion 304: Streubel graduated from Fürstenfeldbruck in December 1937; Mayr graduated from Fürstenfeldbruck in June 1938 and Hanstein graduated as a lieutenant in January 1939 from one of the two schools.⁴³ The average age of this group of junior officers on graduation was 25, which was the average age for new police lieutenants before 1940. As we have seen from the previous chapter, Panis, Pütz, Schellwath and Schleich of Battalion 314 and Lochbrunner, Becker and Seeber of Battalion 304 all graduated from the 19th Officer Course at Berlin-Köpenick in July 1941. The average age of this group on graduation was 21. Most of the older group had spent considerable time in the rank and file of the police, SS or the army before attending police officer training. The younger group had all joined as part of the 26,000-man campaign, just over a year before their graduation as officers. The officer cadets of the 19th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick are likely to have been mostly the *Abiturenten* from the 1918-20 year groups that were allowed to be recruited as officer candidates as part of the recruiting campaign: a younger and less experienced group than previous officer cadet groups.

³⁹ Bartov, *Eastern Front*, p.74.

⁴⁰ Ripley, *Wehrmacht*, p.216.

⁴¹ NA WO 208/3197, 'Schools and Training Establishments of the German Police'. Best, *Polizei*, p.80. The police officer school in Fürstenfeldbruck, Bavaria was established in 1933 as the Bayern *Polizeihauptschule* and became the *Polizei Offizier-und Schutzpolizeischule* in 1936. In 1942 the school became the *Offizierschule der Ordnungspolizei*. The Berlin-Köpenick officer school was established on 1 February 1936 and was moved to Oranienburg in 1943 and to Mariaschein, Sudetenland in 1944. Phil Nix and Georges Jerome, *The Uniformed Police Forces of the Third Reich 1933-1945* (Stockholm: Leandoer and Ekholm, 2006), pp.103-4.

⁴² BAB SSO 131A, SS personnel file Jahnhorst, SSO 128, SS personnel file Christ, R9361-III 74247, RuSHA 'Fragebogen' form Hertel. R19 1255, HA Orpo file Steinmann. SSO 040, SS personnel file Bauer.

⁴³ BAB VBS 2836060002238, RuSHA 'Fragebogen' form Streubel. SSO 304A, SS personnel file Mayr. SSO 062A, SS personnel file Hanstein.

In preparation for the 19th Officer Course at Berlin-Köpenick, Himmler sent a message to the Dresden-Hellerau police NCO school regarding the collection and transportation of officer candidates to Berlin. The message states that the training would commence on 12 February 1941 and the last training day was scheduled to be 12 July 1941. "Since the police *Wachtmeister* and the candidates (those who have completed the Abitur) already took part in [NCO] training, the training is to be started right away." In the message, Himmler clearly distinguishes between the NCOs and the aspiring officer candidates who had done their Abitur. Of the two groups, Himmler clearly favoured the latter as officer material: "After the mid-term exams I am to be informed by 26. 5. 41. of any reasons, particularly with regards to the police *Wachtmeister*, for individuals who are only partly suited to a career as an officer and are not to continue the training." An indication of the type of training the candidates were to receive can be seen in the articles that Himmler instructed them to bring with them, including: two bullet cases; a rifle, pistol and ammunition; field dressing; a gasmask and field glasses. The candidates were also to bring their own pens and pads for the classroom lessons.⁴⁴

Over the course of six months the officer candidates were to be schooled and assessed in six main topics: platoon leader training in preparation for the "front"; physical education; police tactics; air raid defence; legal education and police precinct and office duty. The legal education was split into six categories: criminal law and court proceedings; general police law; special police law; traffic law; national politics and ideological education; administrative and civil service law and civil law. Altogether the individual final assessments appear to have been weighted towards the legal education. The candidates were also taught war history, weaponry, teacher training and general "life teachings".⁴⁵ It is not clear from the surviving documents precisely how much time was spent on each subject during the course.

A surviving document from the Berlin-Köpenick school to be used as part of the course was intended to provide an overview of the role of a Schutzpolizei officer as "teacher" and "educator":

- 1) The guiding line for every police task is always the worldview. The police *Wachtmeister* is firstly to be schooled in the sense of the National Socialist worldview.
- 2) The police are tied to the laws in its tasks; because we don't live in a police state but a state of law. But the laws are laid out today according to the National Socialist

⁴⁴ StA 120 Js, undated letter from Himmler regarding the 19. Offizier Lehrgang at Berlin-Köpenick.

⁴⁵ BAB R19 1255, HA Orpo file Steinmann, report from 14. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1939. R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber, report from 19. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1941. VBS I 170037225 Lochbrunner, report from 19. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1941.

worldview. The law book has stayed the same, but the view has changed. The *Wachtmeister* must have good knowledge of the laws, but in addition, a general idea of the laws that are not relevant for us.

- 3) Furthermore, every policeman has to be familiar with the political, economic and cultural situation. He must have good general knowledge.
- 4) He must be bred to have a strong personality and character. He acts according to his sense of duty, which means that he has to be just towards all members of the Volk.
- 5) He must be physically fit.
- 6) He must be good with arms.⁴⁶

In the course material that was used by Berlin-Köpenick that survived the war there are no explicitly antisemitic sections or references, but that does not mean that antisemitism did not feature during the courses. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that antisemitism featured just as much, if not more so, in the officer training as compared with the basic training of the new police recruits. After interviewing Karl Jäger, formerly of Battalion 304, during the 1970s the East German prosecutors concluded that he had been convinced by SS antisemitic ideas during his basic training but even more so during his time at the officer school, despite the fact that he failed the course.⁴⁷ As is made clear by the overview of the pedagogical goals of the courses, the Nazi worldview was to be the foundation of the training; the “guiding line” for all police duties. As the key component of the worldview, racist ideas must have been prominent during the ideological lessons and the prism through which other aspects of the training were to be viewed.

As part of their training the candidates were exposed to Nazi ideological ideas in practice. In their post-war testimonies, both Bauer and Hertel stated that as part of the course the trainees were taken to “visit” the Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg concentration camp. Hertel attended the course in the second half of 1939 and Bauer the second half of 1940. Both men claimed that they were informed that only “opponents of the regime” and criminals were imprisoned there.⁴⁸ At the end of 1939 the camp contained over 12,000 prisoners with a broad range of categories of prisoners, including Gypsies, Jews, Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals and in 1940 the majority of the prisoner population was non-German. During the winter of 1939-40 the death toll rose considerably and in the period January to May 1940 there were 2,184 registered deaths. Many of these deaths

⁴⁶ BAB R20/67. Document used for the 19th Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick 1941, ‘The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei’.

⁴⁷ StA 120 Js, summary on Karl Jäger, 1981, p.1770.

⁴⁸ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.13-19.

resulted from executions. Rudolf Höss, who was part of the camp administration from 1938 to 1940, claimed that there were executions every day after the outbreak of the war; executions that included many prisoners categorised as Jews.⁴⁹ Neither Bauer nor Hertel stated how long these visits lasted or what precisely they were exposed to. However, it seems highly unlikely that the course members taken to the camp were not exposed to the brutal measures employed by the administration and the guards and the extreme conditions in which the prisoners were held. Located in Oranienburg was the office of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps headed by Theodor Eicke and a training school for camp leaders and guards where procedures of systematic terror were developed in theory and practice.⁵⁰ Again, it would seem unlikely that an opportunity to integrate the training of the police officer candidates with the ideological, theoretical and practical training of the SS camp system located within the vicinity of the camp would be missed.

Following his takeover of the uniformed police in 1936, Himmler made it clear that the uniformed police, like the political police, should not be restricted by “legal norms”. Instead, the policeman in his duties was to follow a National Socialist “common sense”.⁵¹ An examiner for a gendarmerie officer training course in 1941 set out the expected answers to a question regarding punishment under the law.

1. A person is sentenced when he commits a deed which under the law is punishable.
2. A person is punished, further, if he commits a deed which, according to the people’s basic thought [*Grundgedanken*] of a law and according to the basic people’s judicial sentiment [*Volksempfinden*] deserves punishment.
3. If no criminal law can be applied, then the deed is punishable according to that law which best corresponds to the basic thought.⁵²

National Socialist legal philosophy was based on *Volk* and race rather than state and law, meaning that this concept of a legal code, centred as it was on the Nazi brand of “common sense” was arbitrary in nature and emotional, as demonstrated by the examiner’s model answer to the question above.⁵³

This concept of a Nazi common sense is evident in an example of a lesson draft on the topic of fraud to be used at Berlin-Köpenick. The object of the lesson was not to understand a particular aspect of

⁴⁹ Günter Morsch, ‘Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen, Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg’, in Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth and Christoph Dieckmann (eds.), *Die Nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Entwicklung und Struktur* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), vol. 1, pp.111-129. Wolfgang Benz, Hermann Graml and Hermann Weiß (eds.), *Enzyklopädie des National Sozialismus* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1997), pp.685-6 and 774-5. Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, trans. Constantine FitzGibbon (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), pp.82-132.

⁵⁰ *Enzyklopädie*, p.774.

⁵¹ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.205.

⁵² Cited in Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, pp.131-2.

⁵³ Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft*, p.270. Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.132.

the law, but for the candidate to understand what is wrong-doing. “The wrongness of fraud is to be focused on, in this way the candidate should reach a stage where there is a strong impulse to intervene”, this is the “cultivational goal of the lesson.”⁵⁴ The lesson plan starts with some examples of fraud and deception and moves on to discuss the wrongness of “lies”, something the instructor was to emphasise that “a German person is unworthy of” and “goes against the German character.” The concluding section exhorts the instructor to make clear that severe punishments should be administered for “underhandedness” especially if it threatens the welfare of society. Following this the instructor should explain that the “common good before self-interest is a principle of the National Socialist worldview”.⁵⁵ The purpose of the lesson was to contribute to the cultivation of a Nazi common sense that would elicit an emotional response to “crimes” that threatened the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Instead of being a lesson on a common aspect of the law, which would seem to be a usual part of police training, the lesson is infused with ideological strains. That this particular criminal aspect is depicted as being contrary to “Germanness” indicates a view of criminality along biological lines.⁵⁶ The examiner of the gendarmerie officer course went on to write in relation to the question of “lawful punishment” that “a man with polluted blood is not capable of recognising injustice, but a man with racially pure blood is”.⁵⁷

As part of the “legal” training at Berlin-Köpenick, the officer candidates were being taught that Jews and other *fremdvölkische* elements were not only excluded from the Nazi concept of law, but were also more likely to act in a manner that was contrary to the “common good” of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. In a speech to gendarmerie commanders in January 1941, the protection of the Volk was presented as the ultimate function of the police ranks: “As the representative of the State, a police officer must be the best friend of the Volk, while he must be the representative of the *Volksgemeinschaft* against all criminal elements it is possible to be at the same time the true friend of every *anständig* German and the resolute adversary of every enemy of the Volk.”⁵⁸ The arbitrary and emotional basis of National Socialist concept of legality based on this particular brand of “common sense” provided a fertile foundation for the graduates of the police officer training to justify and legitimise the murder of civilians in terms of the inherent criminality of the victims and as necessary and “decent” acts in defence of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. More will be discussed on this aspect of the role of the junior officers in the following chapters.

⁵⁴ BAB R20/67, ‘Example of a lesson plan’, undated.

⁵⁵ BAB R20/67. ‘Example of a lesson plan’.

⁵⁶ Longerich, *Himmler*, pp.203-4.

⁵⁷ Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.135.

⁵⁸ Cited in André Mineau, ‘SS Ethics within Moral Philosophy’, in Wolfgang Bialas and Lothar Fritze (eds.), *Nazi Ideology and Ethics* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), p.313.

The intent to inject a Nazi common sense based on the worldview doctrines with police duties is apparent in the training material regarding obedience to orders and the use of initiative. During his trial in the 1970s, Bauer admitted that in addition to learning the fundamentals of criminal law, the training at Berlin-Köpenick also included a focus on a section of the military penal law regarding “illegal orders”.⁵⁹ An extract from the Wehrmacht periodical *Kriegskunst und Bild* was used as part of the 16th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick in October 1939. A section discussing the potential difficulties that unit leaders might face in war, titled: “How would a tactical task work in practice?” illustrates the notion of the sanctity of orders, but also mentions the possibility of not following orders. “One starts with the order. What does the order that I have received say? The order is the entire base for the actions of the leader! He may never move away from the order he received unless there are very important reasons for doing so”.⁶⁰ The extract doesn’t give any examples of “very important reasons” for not carrying out an order. However, given that the Nazi worldview and common sense was intended to form the basis for interpretation of law along with other aspects relating to police duties, much may have been left to the individual’s interpretation of what constitutes an “illegal order” or orders that do not conform to a personal interpretation of the worldview. This indicates a degree of flexibility in interpretation, albeit within the somewhat abstract boundaries of the worldview. The formation of the police into military style regiments and battalions implemented a militarised hierarchical structure infused with SS personnel and principles. However, during their training the officer candidates were taught and encouraged to exercise initiative. In October 1941 Hitler spoke about the “culture of activism” and initiative that had been fostered throughout the Nazi ranks over the years. “Where would I be if I did not find trusted men to do the work that I cannot do, hard men...who act as radically as I would? The best man for me is he who bothers me least, in that he takes 95 out of 100 decisions on himself.”⁶¹ Within the Nazi organisation it had become common for subordinates to use their “common sense” in interpreting orders. A document from 1939 explains this process: “In the interest of the Party it is also in many cases the custom of the person issuing the command – precisely in cases of illegal demonstrations – not to say everything and just to hint at what he wants to achieve with the order.”⁶² The importance of initiative is highlighted in the overview of the purpose of the schooling at Berlin-Köpenick. To use [knowledge] correctly, one needs a mental flexibility and beyond that a straight-forward and goal-oriented disposition. If the student gets unused to working independently then the mind is slow and

⁵⁹ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.13.

⁶⁰ BAB R20/67, ‘Tactics! How to master any situation’, from ‘Kriegskunst in Wort und Bild’, 1 October 1939.

⁶¹ Cited in Christopher R. Browning, ‘Problem Solvers’, in Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.128.

⁶² Cited in Evans, *Third Reich*, p.327.

acts as a hindrance. The police sergeant must learn to think and act independently.”⁶³ However, within the same document there appears to be a tension between obeying orders and acting independently in a section under the heading “The main tasks and purpose of the police”. On “individual service”: [The policeman] is responsible for his own actions and can only rely on himself. He must think and judge independently. He acts in a cultivational way [educates others], has to be a role model and must have good standing and appearance.” These standards were also to be expected of a unit leader: “the leader has the responsibility in this case. The [subordinate] has to fulfil orders and tasks and perform under physical strain”.⁶⁴ This section of the overview appears to imply that the future police officers, the leaders of the companies and platoons of the police battalions, were to operate within a hierarchical structure that deflected responsibility for actions from the subordinates within the group or unit to the commander, which at times when the battalions were deployed at company or platoon strength, would be themselves. In these situations the young lieutenants might be expected to “think and judge independently” and act using initiative, thereby taking responsibility for his and his unit’s actions. However, if the “guiding line for every police task is always the worldview”, the officer could use initiative and think “independently” even at the lower levels of the structural hierarchy, if he acted within the parameters of the prescribed worldview.

Overwhelmingly, the training material is dominated by military-related training and theory, including unit and battalion formations, weapons training and the formation of military character. A training document from Berlin-Köpenick dated November 1938, titled: “The organisation of a strengthened police battalion”, demonstrates the intentions of melding established Wehrmacht structures and methods with police training. Major Freitag, the author of this training material, reasoned that as an increasing number of individuals at that time were joining the ranks of the police after receiving some kind of military training in the Hitler Youth, SS-work service and the Wehrmacht, the exercises and battle training of the Orpo were to be “based on Wehrmacht regulations and not some older regulations of the police that were based on other tactical considerations”. Freitag stated that in the interests of a thriving cooperation between the police and the military, common forms such as language, technical terms, decision-making, the dispensing of orders and the formation of units should be made the same, but with some aspects particular to the police. These ideas were based on the anticipated role of the police in the upcoming war which, Freitag argued, “means developing new police tactics which are removed from the basic ideas of the Wehrmacht tactics”.⁶⁵ The

⁶³ BAB R20/67, ‘The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei’, 1941.

⁶⁴ BAB R20/67, ‘The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei’, 1941.

⁶⁵ BAB R20/67, ‘The organisation of a strengthened police battalion’, November 1938.

overview of the lesson goals for the training at Berlin-Köpenick which appears likely to have been written after the invasion of Poland, highlights the tasks of the police during war. "Here the police have the tasks of pacifying and securing the borders, defence against air raids, espionage, sabotage, parachutists and air-landing troops, the clearing of specific areas and active action at the front."⁶⁶ Clearly the police battalions were intended to be formed as combat capable units but the main body of their tasks were anticipated to be in securing the areas behind the front line and on the home front. For Freitag the decisive factors in organising and equipping the police fighting corps were their anticipated wartime functions and "probable enemy". Freitag identified the main task of the police to be the "controlling and annihilation of armed rebels in the city and in the country" as well as parachutists and "specific enemy troops". To combat these enemies would require "specific equipment and good training of the protection corps" for "close combat of all kinds" including the use of daggers, side-arms, spades, grenades, pistols and bayonets.⁶⁷ Therefore, the officer cadets were not only to be trained in group military forms and police tactics, but were also to be trained as police soldiers capable of killing at close quarters; although in this particular case the training ideas seem to be directed towards killing armed "rebels". The *Haltung* of the policeman, in addition to being based on the Nazi worldview was to be "a soldierly one in every task".⁶⁸ However, it was the internalisation of the ideological worldview that was considered to be the greatest asset to be cultivated in the officer cadets. It was the "soul" of the leader, more than physical and mental abilities that would "enable the leader in the most difficult of storms and battles to be a role model for his men amidst death and horror and to step out in front of them calm and relaxed before death". It was to be made clear to the officer candidates that it was possible to acquire these abilities by being "strict with yourself", by "overcoming egocentricities in thinking about yourself and instead thinking about the community and the Fatherland".⁶⁹ Outside of the group tactics and weapons training, the military part of the training for the officer candidates included the recurring themes of attaining a specific *Haltung*, acting as a role model for their subordinates, putting aside self-interest and acting with feeling, or "soul" towards the community or "Volk".

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the police officer training which would have the most far-reaching effects on the actions of the police battalions in Eastern Europe was the training of the officer candidates as "educators" and "cultivators" themselves. In the absence of explicit mention of ideological tenets in the surviving training material, the clearest expression of transmitting ideological standards can be found in the attempts of the SS-run school to mould the candidates into

⁶⁶ BAB R20/67, 'The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei', 1941.

⁶⁷ BAB R20/67, 'The organisation of a strengthened police battalion', November 1938.

⁶⁸ BAB R20/67, 'The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei', 1941.

⁶⁹ BAB R20/67, 'Tactics! How to master any situation', from 'Kriegskunst in Wort und Bild', 1 October 1939.

educators or cultivators of the Nazi worldview.⁷⁰ In a part of a training document dedicated to educational methods, titled: “Education and upbringing in the National Socialist State”, the instructors and future instructors are shown a life cycle of worldview cultivation. Starting in the parental house the young person learns the German language, “the greatest connecting bond of the Volk”, and learns ideas of “integrity, manners, obedience and honesty.” At school the boy learns a “sense of duty” and after ten years of age, a sense of pre-military education and “love of the Fatherland.” In the Hitler Youth the boy is strengthened in his worldview and will be consequently accepted into the Party or one of its divisions. Following the Hitler Youth and work service, the young man is to enter a category of the military which represents “the coronation of his prior pre-military education”, where he is “educated to act independently” as a “political soldier” and finally to become a “role model for the young nation.”⁷¹

Instructions from the Inspectorate of Security Police and SD addressed to the leaders of the “schooling community” dated 21 March 1941 outlined the type of pedagogical aims of the SS-run training courses: “The community leader is a leader and educator, not teacher. He is a role model and comrade...The community leader has to guide adults in the SS way”. “[The training] should grip the men mentally in their worldview and make their thinking and feeling uniformly in the spirit of the SS-man.”⁷² This is the type of approach taught at the Berlin-Köpenick school that officers in their role as educators were to adopt. Some instructions given to the instructors at the school on the intended purpose of the lessons state: “It is not enough to have a large amount of knowledge, but to pass it on to others in a lesson kind of way...Specific knowledge is not enough, one must be able to apply this knowledge to specific areas.”⁷³ Throughout the instructional material are references to appealing to the whole person, in “body, mind and soul.” The instructors were to appeal to all the senses and create emotional experiences which, all together, should create the desired *Haltung*. However, these methods and attempts to create an emotional experience were not to be overdone. According to the instructions, the lessons should still be “fresh, fun and lively...as too serious tone can put [the student] off or seem comical.”⁷⁴ The intention appears to have been for the instructor to create an all-encompassing yet comradely experience. The officer candidates were to emotionally internalise the ideological *Haltung* and then pass it on to others. In starting with the ideological base,

⁷⁰ The German term used in the training material is *Erziehen*.

⁷¹ BAB R20/67, Document used for the 19th Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick 1941, ‘General Introduction’ to ‘educational’ matters.

⁷² Bundesarchiv Koblenz N1682/5 [hereafter BAK] Personal papers of Rudolf Querner, ‘Unterrichtsmaterial und Merkblätter der Polizei-offizierschule Berlin-Köpenick’, April 1936 – March 1943. Security Police and SD training document dated 29 March 1941.

⁷³ BAB R20/67, ‘The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei’, 1941.

⁷⁴ BAB R20/67, ‘The scope of the teaching and educational activities of the officer of the Schutzpolizei’, 1941.

the intention was to “cultivate” an ideological lens through which all following lessons were to be viewed. “The cultivation takes its principles from the worldview. The worldview finds its principles in National Socialism and, in turn, the Führer’s book *Mein Kampf* and the Führer’s speeches.”⁷⁵

The training of the police battalions did not end with basic training, the education of the men, including the achievement of the desired *Haltung*, was intended to be an ongoing process. One of the means of achieving or maintaining the desired *Haltung* was to hold informal get-togethers and other social events. These events were intended to supplement the more formal training and were probably used during the training courses as well as after the units had been deployed in Poland and the former Soviet territories.⁷⁶ “Fellowship evenings” appear to have been a frequent event and could involve the whole battalion or be organised at company or platoon level. One former member of the 2nd Company of 304 recalled one of a number of company fellowship evenings.⁷⁷ These evenings were encouraged by Himmler and he even issued guidelines for the holding of these events in February 1941. Himmler directed that there must be a responsible leader present who was to be in control of the proceedings. The leaders were not to “sit together and build a club amongst themselves, but to sit among the men, that is why it is called a fellowship evening”. Himmler clearly did not want these events to turn into drinking evenings and issued strict regulations on the amount of alcohol each man could consume. Instead, the evenings were intended to maintain an *esprit de corps* and include some suitable music, poems and a speech by the leader. The evenings were also to be used as a means of education.⁷⁸ These events, primarily a mechanism for the shaping of the *Haltung* of the police, probably did not usually conform to Himmler’s guidelines.⁷⁹ The tone and itinerary probably depended on the officer or officers leading them.

Whether as part of the fellowship evenings or during some other time, officers were supposed to hold 30-45 minute sessions every week on themes that could be used as a medium to convey Nazi “educational” themes.⁸⁰ Themes that were used by the police before the invasion of the Soviet Union included: “Jews and criminality”, “the blood community” and “the greater German Reich”.⁸¹ Instructions dated 18 July 1941 intended to be used by leaders of “political classes”, including company and platoon leaders, outlined the political worldview lesson over the weeks following 28 July 1941. Topics to be covered included a general overview of the nationalities and different

⁷⁵ BAB R20/67, Document used for the 19th Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick 1941, ‘General Introduction’ to ‘educational’ matters.

⁷⁶ Matthäus, ‘Anti-Semitism as an Offer’, pp.19-20.

⁷⁷ StA 120 Js, statement by Kluge, 1977, p.1138.

⁷⁸ Matthäus, Kwiet, Förster and Breitman (eds.), *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord?* Document 13, pp.196-8.

⁷⁹ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.81.

⁸⁰ Browning, *Origins*, p.232.

⁸¹ Browning, *Origins*, p.232.

peoples of “Russia”; “Jewishness”, on which the focus was to be on the role of the Jews and the Bolshevik leadership during revolution and state leadership.⁸² These then were the type of lessons that were to be delivered by the unit commanders of the police battalion that probably included the recently graduated young officers. One former member of the 2nd Company of 314 recalled Bauer giving a lesson a few days before the invasion of the Soviet Union on “the political view and spirit”.⁸³ It is not clear whether Bauer was giving the lesson to his platoon or the whole company or if he was using instructions distributed by the SS and police leadership. In any case, Bauer, who would only have been 23 years old at the time, was performing one of the tasks he had been specifically groomed for at the officer school. The effectiveness of these lessons may have, in part, depended on the individual giving them, but the extent to which these messages were internalised by the men receiving them cannot be accurately determined. An article from the “Black Corps” in 1938 indicates the indifference of some SS men to these indoctrination lessons: “Of course, this or that person thinks, ‘We ought to go along, especially because our superior officer is also going to be there (promotion!). In any case’, as these people console themselves in a typically philistine manner, ‘the cosy get-together afterwards is always really nice’”.⁸⁴

As officers these men were to “cultivate” their subordinates, in part through delivering regular political instruction sessions, but were also to behave as “role models”. Police officers that were involved in educating the rank and file were to set an example by conducting themselves publically and privately in the “proper” National Socialist way. Educators were to maintain a “strict military posture in his conduct, dress, speech, and form of expression.”⁸⁵ Here we can see the intended purpose of the “life teachings” aspect of the officer training. The officers as educators were to consider themselves as “political warriors in front of political soldiers” and were to provide the men under their command greater awareness of “positive living”; “he must live what he teaches”.⁸⁶ Three of the junior officers from Battalion 314 must have been considered effective enough as educators as they went on to become training officers in police training schools in 1943. Panis and Bauer became training officers for the Police Officer School that was Berlin-Köpenick, but was then relocated to Oranienburg and then Mariaschein in the Sudetenland. Schleich was employed as a training officer at the Police Weapons School in Lyon.⁸⁷

⁸² Matthäus, Kwiet, Förster and Breitman (eds.), *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord?* Document 14, pp.198-9.

⁸³ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Fährmeister, 1974, p.2209.

⁸⁴ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.313.

⁸⁵ Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, pp.109-116.

⁸⁶ Heller, ‘Ordnungspolizei’, p.119.

⁸⁷ BAB SSO 040, SS personnel file Bauer, VBS 283 6040013719 (Panis), VBS 283 6050009661 (Schleich).

Part of the role of the junior officers then, was to carry themselves as model SS officers and National Socialists. From the concluding assessments of some of the graduates of police officer training, it appears that considerable weight was placed on the character of the candidate by their evaluators. Mayer graduated from Fürstenfeldbruck in June 1938 with an overall score of 157, a much higher score than the average for that particular course which was 127. Mayer had had considerable practical experience within SS organisations, having already served as a Dachau guard, attended the SS-Junker school in Braunschweig and held a position in the RuSHA before attending police officer school. Mayer was also judged by a superior in the RuSHA as having a “clean character”, to be a “good comrade” and a “fanatical National Socialist”.⁸⁸ Mayer did well in officer training and he received a good final evaluation from the training school: “Lieutenant Mayer is spiritually above the average of his comrades and has an interest in his profession. Accordingly, he showed independent thinking in his performances”. However, the evaluator concluded: “In his manners he has yet to be rounded”.⁸⁹ Steinmann, from the 14th Officer Training course in Berlin-Köpenick in December 1939 also seems to have been considered to be somewhat lacking in his personal bearing: “In appearance and posture he is lacking and that is why as of now he is not to be used as a training officer”. Steinmann’s overall score was 116, slightly lower than the average score of 118 and he received “satisfactory” grades for most of the subjects, including platoon leader and ideological training. His best mark was in administration and civil law, which may have led to Steinmann becoming an adjutant rather than a platoon commander.⁹⁰ Seeber graduated from the 19th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick in July 1941 with an overall score of 75, five points lower than the average for the course.⁹¹ However, despite his low score Seeber received only praise in his concluding evaluation: “Neat character with clear, open nature. He is well built, appearance and manners are impeccable. He has leadership qualities and promises to be a useful officer”.⁹² Clearly manner, physical appearance and posture were considered to be important characteristics for a junior officer and platoon leader. SS candidates were to be accepted only if they passed a “racial examination”, which involved an assessment of “physical build” and a “racial evaluation”.⁹³ The type of “manner” and

⁸⁸ BAB SSO 304A, SS personnel file Mayr.

⁸⁹ BAB SSO 304A, SS personnel file Mayr.

⁹⁰ BAB R19 1255, HA Orpo file Steinmann, report from 14. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1939.

⁹¹ BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber, report from 19. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1941. Seeber’s classmate Lochbrunner scored 77, VBS I 170037225 Lochbrunner, report from 19. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1941.

⁹² BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber, report from 19. Officer Cadet Course at Berlin-Köpenick, 1941.

⁹³ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.302. Heinz Höhne, *The Order of the Death’s Head. The Story of Hitler’s SS* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp.146-47.

“posture” desired of the junior officers is not clear, but seems likely to have been based on Himmler’s romanticised ideal of a “chivalrous” and “decent” *SS Junker* order.⁹⁴

That the average score for the 19th Officer Training course in 1941 was much lower than that of the 1938 and 1939 courses suggests a general decrease in technical ability of the police officer candidates. That the majority of the 121 officer candidates that graduated from Berlin-Köpenick in July 1941 were probably from the 1918-20 year groups, and therefore younger overall than earlier officer candidate groups, suggests that a relative lack of prior “professional” experience may have been the reason for the lower scores on technical matters. However, as we have seen, technical capabilities were not the only criteria the instructors and examiners were interested in. Overall, as *Abiturenten* and former HJ leaders this group of officer candidates may have been a better fit to the SS-police ideal of the future officer corps than men like Mayer and Steinmann; neither of whom were *Abiturenten* or had been members of the HJ. The only policemen from Battlions 314 and 304 known to have attended an officer course and failed is Jäger of Battalion 304. It is likely that Jäger attended the Berlin-Köpenick officer school from September to December 1940 after the NCO course in Dresden-Hellerau. Jäger had been a member of the SA as a troop leader, and the Party since 1931 and had taken part in the arrests of political opponents in his hometown in 1933, so he would have been considered an “old fighter”. However, Jäger was 28 years old during the training, considerably older than the other candidates from the two battalions. In addition, Jäger had attended Realschule and consequently, not been entered for the Abitur. Jäger himself cited the reason for his failing the course was that he didn’t have the Abitur.⁹⁵ It appears likely, despite his proven ideological commitment, that because of his age and limited formal education, Jäger would have been one of the NCOs Himmler considered to be “only partly suited to an officer career”. To adequately perform the “cultivational” role envisioned for them, a high level of formal education and a certain type of physical appearance and personal manner were qualities, along with a level of technical knowledge and capability and ideological strength, considered most desirable for a junior officer in the police battalions.

Two evaluations written in 1943 on the performances as platoon officers in the field of two of the graduates of the 19th Officer Training course, Seeber of Battalion 304 and Panis of Battalion 314, illustrate some of the qualities that were sought after for a junior officer in the police battalions. Seeber was killed by a mine in 1942 and a letter was sent from the HSSPF headquarters in Kiev to the Orpo Main Office in June 1943 evaluating Seeber’s performance as an officer in the battalion.

⁹⁴ On Himmler’s ideal “SS virtues” see Longerich, *Himmler*, pp.304-8.

⁹⁵ StA 120 Js, summary on Jäger, 1981, pp.1767-9.

“Lieutenant Seeber was a very suitable officer. He possessed very good leadership qualities and had an excellent educational and military influence on his platoon. In combat he was always an outstanding role model for his subordinates”.⁹⁶ Captain Meisel of Battalion 314 gave a report of his platoon officer in the 3rd Company Lieutenant Panis in March 1943. Meisel wrote that Panis had shown that he possessed great energy and was composed and “cold blooded in critical situations”. In these ways he “always set a great example for his subordinates in his platoon”. “Because of his [proven] abilities he received special orders during combat missions which he carried out in an exemplary manner...His behaviour towards superiors was always spotless and his manner in uniform was an example to his comrades...He is a good leader to his men who even uses his spare free time to help willing subordinates with their progress by holding lessons”. Meisel rounded off his glowing report with: “Ltn Panis has made National Socialist ideology (*Gedankengut*) his own and he understands [how] to teach his men ideologically (*weltanschaulich*)”.⁹⁷

Panis’s “cold blooded” behaviour in leading and carrying out “special orders” will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. A significant part of the role of the junior officers then was to act as ideological “educators” and “role models” to their subordinates. It appears that part of the officer training courses were geared towards cultivating these leadership qualities, particularly in the “teacher training” and “life teaching” aspects of the training. However, some qualities that were desired by the SS and police leadership from their officers for the performance of these roles could not be attained through officer training, such as the completion of the *Abitur*, a certain type of character, posture, manner and appearance considered to be fitting of a leader of “ideological soldiers”. In this regard the younger officers of the July 1941 class of police lieutenants may not have been lacking despite their lower overall training performance. A generational unit of educational elites and ideologically cultivated former HJ leaders, such as this, may well have suited the ideals of Himmler and Daluge of the future SS and police officer corps just as well, if not better, than their older and more experienced colleagues.

Arrivals

Most of the company and platoon leaders of Battalions 314 and 304 were already with the battalions during basic training in Chemnitz and Vienna. Bauer joined 314 in Poland. During the trial investigations there was some uncertainty when the younger officers of the 19th Officer Training course arrived at Battalions 314 and 304 in Ukraine. Following the end of the training course on 12 July 1941, Panis, Pütz, Schellwath and Schleich reported to the police administration in Düsseldorf

⁹⁶ R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber. Letter dated 18 June 1943.

⁹⁷ BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis.

and Becker, Seeber and Lochbrunner reported to the Munich administration where they were involved in police duties.⁹⁸ Becker claimed that he then returned to Berlin which “was the collection point for 40 new lieutenants who were to be moved to Russia”.⁹⁹ According to Becker, about 40 officers were loaded on a bus and driven towards the east and wherever they reached a place assigned to one of the officers, they jumped out. “Somewhere in Ukraine I arrived with Lieutenant Lochbrunner and one other to Police Battalion 304”.¹⁰⁰ That one other was Lieutenant Seeber.

A memo from Himmler’s office dated 18 August 1941 listed the names of 72 graduates of the 19th Officer Training who were to be assigned to the 22 police battalions already operating in the Soviet Union.¹⁰¹ The memo states that “The [listed] officers are to be on the march so as to arrive at the supply points no later than 22 August 1941, from which they are to be sent on their way to the listed police battalions and reserve police battalions”. The supply point for the police battalions in the southern sector was Cracow.¹⁰² Lieutenants Panis, Schellworth, Schleich and Pütz of Battalion 314 were probably all on the same bus as Lochbrunner, Becker and Seeber of 304 that drove eastwards from Berlin. Schellwath stated in his post-war testimony that he joined the battalion in Kovel; the battalion staff and 3rd Company were stationed in Kovel until the first days of September 1941. In the report written by Meisel on Panis, he states that Panis was with the battalion from 3 September. The post-war witness statements of former rank and file policemen suggest that the new lieutenants arrived at the battalion together, which appears to have been just as Battalion 314 were leaving the Kovel area during the first days of September.¹⁰³ It seems likely that Becker, Lochbrunner and Seeber would have arrived to Battalion 304 around the same time as their colleagues. Battalion 304 was stationed in Starokonstantinov until 4 September, so the three lieutenants probably joined the battalion there.¹⁰⁴ Some of these officers who finished the officer training in the summer of 1941 tried to make the time of their arrival with these units out to be as late as possible in order to avoid being implicated in the earlier massacres carried out by both battalions in Ukraine.¹⁰⁵ However, these junior officers arrived at a time when Battalions 314 and 304 were beginning to carry out massacres of Jewish women and then also children and it appears that some, or perhaps all of these

⁹⁸ BAB R19 1205 HA Orpo file Seeber. Schnellbrief from Daluege dated 8 July 1941.

⁹⁹ StA 120 Js, statement by Becker, 1980, p.1359.

¹⁰⁰ StA 120 Js, statement by Becker, 1980, p.1359.

¹⁰¹ BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber. A total of 121 men graduated from the 19th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick.

¹⁰² BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber.

¹⁰³ StA 320 Js, File 1, summary of statements of former members of Police Battalion 314, p.68. BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis.

¹⁰⁴ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, pp.1591-95.

¹⁰⁵ StA 320 Js, File 1, summary of statements of former members of Police Battalion 314, p.68.

men were involved in large massacres almost immediately following their arrival in Ukraine. Their participation in these massacres will be discussed in the following chapters.

Conclusion

The police battalions were constructed on the back of a pre-existing martial identity of the German police and the basic training of these battalions was grounded on a military model. Basic police and military training were the main blocks of the six months of initial training, but the training was infused with ideological standards. A main aim was to cultivate the worldview of the policemen and a desired *Haltung* amongst the ranks. It is not entirely clear how this aspect of the training differed from the usual general Nazi propaganda tenants and how great an influence it had on the mind-set of the rank and file. It seems likely that the purpose of some aspects of the training was to prepare the policemen for their tasks in Poland and then further east, such as training centred on their intended role in the grand eastern colonial project and encouragements to feel and behave as *Herrenmenschen*. These aspects may well have induced a certain mind-set that some of the policemen took with them into the eastern territories.

The officer training courses at Fürstenfeldbruck and Berlin-Köpenick were intended to create Orpo *Junkers* fit to perform a role based on the German army model. The junior officers of the German army were fundamentally the connecting links between higher orders and the rank and file. These men were to act with unswerving obedience to higher orders, but were also supposed to be able to act with initiative. Traditionally, they were educated men responsible for the morale, discipline and education of the men under their command. The junior officers of the police battalions were to lead from the front and were supposed to know the correct course of action instinctively. However, these “instincts” were to be informed by a solid grounding in Nazi “common sense”. The ideals of Nazi legal theory could only really be carried out by those who acted according to Nazi common sense, which, in general, meant acting according to the general good of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. As role-models these officers were intended to personify the soldierly, SS ideal in looks, manner, thinking and action. Most of the young men who would become junior officers in Battalions 314 and 304 had been cultivated as a National Socialist “vanguard” in the HJ and now they were being trained to carry themselves as a vanguard of the SS. The personal traits of these SS *Junkers* appear to have been considered just as important in the performance of their role as police and military technical knowledge. Perhaps the most important aspect of the role of the junior officers with regards to the carrying out of mass murder by the platoons and companies of the police battalions, lay in their capacity as “educators” or “cultivators”. Ideological rationales for the tasks and actions of the policemen in Eastern Europe seem likely to have been most effective when given face-to-face in the

field. Integral to the role of the junior officers then, was a thorough understanding of Nazi common sense. If the individual officers had not fully internalised the tenets of National Socialism, they were to behave as though they had, and to surrounding events for their subordinates accordingly.

The 72 graduates of Berlin-Köpenick that were dispersed among the police battalions in the Soviet Union in late-August or early-September 1941 may have been a radical injection at a crucial juncture. These young men were deployed at the time when the police battalions in the east were beginning to carry out large-scale massacres of Jewish civilians that included the elderly and infirm, women and children among the victims. The justifications among the perpetrators for these actions may have had to rely even more heavily upon Nazi ideological tenets than perhaps was the case with the earlier massacres of Jewish men of “military age”. Despite their lower overall score, the SS and police leadership must have considered each of the 72 graduates ready to perform these tasks. The reports written by the superiors of Panis and Seeber indicate that at least some of this class performed their envisioned roles in the east more than satisfactorily.

Chapter 3. Poland 1939-1941

Browning has argued that Germans were more transformed by their experiences and actions in Poland between 1939 and 1941 than they had been during the domestic dictatorship from 1933 to 1939.¹ This chapter will outline some of the key events in Poland before the invasion of the Soviet Union, will analyse the experiences and actions of Battalions 304 and 314 while carrying out Nazi racial policies during this period, and determine how significant the events in Poland were for the following mass killing in Ukraine. The battalions arrived in late-1940 following their initial training. By the time of their arrivals, the German occupation agencies in Poland had been involved in brutal and radical “population policies” and had created an atmosphere of violent permissiveness. Upon their arrival, the battalions were enforcing Nazi policies that involved a significant level of brutality and violence, but, as will be shown, by the time the battalions left for Ukraine not every policeman had been directly involved in killing actions in Poland. However, the circumstances and general permissiveness facilitated the emergence of radical elements or enthusiasts among the ranks of the battalions who did engage in killing even though it was not required of them. This chapter will give a brief overview of some events that preceded the arrival of the battalions in Poland, will recreate as far as possible the actions and experiences of the men and officers of the battalions in Poland, and assess their significance for the battalions’ subsequent actions in Ukraine.

Extending the boundaries of permissible behaviour

Colonial ideas concerning the “wild east” had been part of the German social fabric since the Wilhelmine era and the Nazis did not have to construct from scratch a conception of Poland as an area fit for German colonisation. The German soldiers, policemen and civilian administrators that entered Poland in 1939 and 1940 had long been exposed to historical stereotypes of Poland as a “backward”, “hostile” place inhabited by racial inferiors.² The Nazis’ building on existing cultural notions of “the east” as a strange, hostile place, populated by inferior peoples (excepting the ethnic German inhabitants) undoubtedly contributed to the effect on many of the German soldiers and policemen entering Poland of removing moral and ethical norms that would normally have

¹ Browning, *Origins*, p.430.

² Kristin Kopp, ‘Constructing Racial Difference in Colonial Poland’, in Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (eds.), *Germany’s Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp.76-7. Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, pp.55-64. Zimmerer, ‘Ostland’, pp.121-2. Harvey, ‘Management and Manipulation’, p.95. See also Wendy Lower, ‘Living Space’ in Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East. 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

influenced their behaviour in the Reich. Connected to the portrayals of “backwardness”, Poles and Jews were couched as racial “others”, as natural and dangerous enemies of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.³

The Polish campaign set the pattern for the systematic targeting of civilians that would become the Nazis’ method of warfare in the subsequent campaigns in eastern and southeastern Europe.⁴

Between September and December 1939 the Einsatzgruppen, Self-defence corps (ethnic Germans under SS coordination), the Uniformed Police, Waffen-SS and the German army shot approximately 45,000 Polish citizens in the German occupied parts of Poland. About 7,000 of this total were Polish Jews; a figure somewhat higher than the Jewish portion of the population.⁵ Field commanders often took their own measures against civilians, ranging from the execution of individuals to entire villages without referring to higher levels in the command structure in administering disproportionate reprisals for civilian attacks. No specific instructions had been issued regarding the summary destruction of homes and communities, so these commanders were spontaneously acting using their initiative, without having to depend on the formalities of courts-martial.⁶ The massacres of civilians in large numbers by the German army would continue even after the establishment of the civilian administration.⁷ In contrast to Bartov’s arguments on the process of barbarisation of the Wehrmacht in the Soviet Union,⁸ Rossino argues that the war of 1939 spanned too short a time period for brutalization to have had a significant impact.⁹ The German Army was already operating in a destructive way, using racially motivated methods that stood in conjunction with the veneration of violence and ideological goals of National Socialism and established the context in which the Einsatzgruppen would develop their brutal practices.¹⁰

As part of the operation code-named “Tannenberg”, Einsatzgruppen consisting of SS and police personnel under the leadership of selected men of the Security Police and SD, followed the Wehrmacht into Poland. In addition to these units a “special purpose” (z.b.V.) group lead by Udo von Woyrsch was added at the time of the invasion. The “Directives for the Deployment Abroad of the Security Police and the SD” of July 1939, directives agreed to by the OKH and Heydrich, described the responsibilities of the Einsatzgruppen as “combating all elements hostile to the Reich and to

³ Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, pp. 225-31.

⁴ Jürgen Matthäus, Jochen Böhrer and Klaus-Michael Mallmann (eds.), *War, Pacification, and Mass Murder, 1939. The Einsatzgruppen in Poland* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), p.2.

⁵ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010), p.123. Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.145.

⁶ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, pp.125 and 142.

⁷ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, p.122.

⁸ Omer Bartov, *Hitler’s Army. Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁹ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.191.

¹⁰ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.121. Matthäus, Böhrer and Mallmann, *Einsatzgruppen*, p.6.

Germany”, authorized the arrest of all persons on a wanted list, including German emigrants, and Poles who primarily on the basis of their position and reputation, might be considered a security threat. However, the directive also clearly forbade “the abuse or killing of arrested persons”, and explicitly stated that force was only to be used to “break the resistance”.¹¹ From the start the Einsatzgruppen engaged in the mass executions of people within the context of the “intelligentsia campaign”, a campaign designed to debilitate the Polish state by eliminating its leadership, but the Einsatzgruppen extended their mandate for mass killing to involve Polish Jews. The instructions given to von Woyrsch, which appear to have been similar to those given to other Einsatzgruppen leaders on 11 September, were directed towards the spreading of terror amongst the Jewish population in order to force as many as possible to flee from areas intended for German colonisation; in the case of von Woyrsch’s group, East-Upper Silesia.¹²

In addition to the members of the Uniformed Police who formed part of the Einsatzgruppen, 21 police battalions had been deployed in Poland by the end of September 1939. Like the Einsatzgruppen, these battalions were assigned to each of the Wehrmacht’s armies, were subordinated to the respective army commander and were supposed to “sweep behind the advancing armies”.¹³ During the campaign the police battalions were to perform tasks that ranged from duties such as guarding prisoners, weapons transports and important industrial sites, to engaging in combat with the Polish army and carrying out executions of civilians. Because of the rapid advancements of the German armies, the police battalions became involved in fighting sections of the Polish army that had been bypassed by the Wehrmacht.¹⁴ The accounts of military successes of these units would no doubt have found their way into the training curriculum of the 300-level battalions in 1940. As well as engaging in fighting, the actions and perceptions towards Polish resistance mirrored those of broad sections of the Wehrmacht. During the course of the war, police reports described armed resistance as acts by “bandits”, “gangs” or “guerrillas”, thus reflecting the criminalisation of any resistance to the imposition of German “law and order”.¹⁵ Also mirroring the Wehrmacht directives legitimising reprisals and summary executions, on 3 September, Himmler ordered his police units to execute Polish “rioters” found with weapons on the spot. On 5 September “gang fighters” were reported to be at large in Tschenstockau (Częstochowa). The police battalion sent in to put down the resistance did so with brutality, reporting afterwards that the

¹¹ Wildt, *Generation*, pp.220-1.

¹² Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.165. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, pp.90-2.

¹³ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.126.

¹⁴ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.126-7.

¹⁵ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.127.

“franc-tireurs” had been hanged on lamp-posts in the street.¹⁶ Aside from killings related to “security” or “resistance” revolving largely around racial prerogatives, during the war and under the following civilian administration the police were heavily involved in the execution of racial policy in Poland. Along with the Einsatzgruppen, the Self-Defence Corps, Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht units, the police were involved in the executions of Polish “elites”, Jews, the patients of psychiatric institutions, “a-social” individuals, prostitutes and Gypsies.¹⁷ It appears that the police were consistently using capital punishment for a variety of reasons.¹⁸

During the Polish campaign tensions arose between elements in the Wehrmacht hierarchy and the SS leadership. Some Wehrmacht commanders were not prepared to accept the killings being perpetrated by German units, particularly those committed by SS and police units. It appears that the objections raised by some Wehrmacht commanders were based primarily on two concerns. First, the objections to the excessive violence inflicted on the Polish Jews that offended segments of the officer corps were based less on humanitarian concerns than on the detrimental effect on army discipline. Second, the killings done by the SS units were carried out without court-martial which, although Wehrmacht commanders were doing the same thing, was seen as a challenge to Wehrmacht executive authority.¹⁹ However, perhaps because most Wehrmacht officers did not fundamentally disagree with the targeting of Polish civilians in principle, the Wehrmacht leadership was open to negotiation with the SS leadership. Over a period of a few days in mid-September 1939 in the midst of war, although they were in a position to intervene in the mass murder being carried out by SS units, Wehrmacht officers made large concessions that gave the SS leadership significant extensions of authority in Poland.²⁰ On 4 October, Hitler declared a general amnesty for SS and army personnel who were to undergo trials as a result of Wehrmacht commanders’ interventions for committing crimes against Polish civilians, citing an understandable “embitterment caused by Polish atrocities”.²¹ Perhaps even more significantly, at the end of the war in October 1939, Hitler gave permission to Himmler for the creation of a separate jurisdiction for SS and police courts comparable to the military courts.²² Therefore, from October 1939, all SS and police units and personnel deployed in Poland were subject to a new judicial system which included authority to issue the death penalty. In his biography of Himmler, Longerich has pointed out that it was not coincidental that this separate jurisdiction was granted after the war, on the heels of attempts by the Wehrmacht

¹⁶ Mallmann, ‘Ordnungspolizei in Polen’, p.73.

¹⁷ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.145.

¹⁸ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.158.

¹⁹ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, pp.85-8.

²⁰ Wildt, *Generation*, pp.229-31. Wette, *The Wehrmacht*, p.101.

²¹ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, pp.270-1, (note 100).

²² Longerich, *Himmler*, p.344.

to prosecute SS personnel and the extension of SS authority over repressive security measures. On an organisational level, this judicial system afforded Himmler the means to ensure that his particular principles on “decency and discipline” within the SS were abided by.²³

As Rossino has highlighted, the relationship between the army and SS was complicated and full of contradictions, but common racist perceptions of Poles and Jews were enough to facilitate a significant level of cooperation.²⁴ The level of cooperation and the weakness of Wehrmacht commanders provided the opportunities to extend the authority of the SS by creating its own independent judicial courts.²⁵ The concessions made by the Wehrmacht regarding the SS and police use of court-martials and the recognition of an SS chain of command outside of Wehrmacht channels would give the SS leadership far more room for manoeuvre in establishing the organisation’s dominance over racial security issues. These developments combined with the experience of involvement in reprisals, the prosecution of racial policies, and the general mistreatment of the Jews in 1939 extended the boundaries of permissible behaviour within the ranks of the Uniformed Police.²⁶

Following the defeat of Poland, the military administration was officially replaced by a civilian administration on 26 October 1939.²⁷ Beginning in autumn 1939 Nazi organisations attempted to implement population policies based on racial principles. The western parts of Polish territory were to be annexed to the Reich and “Germanised” largely through resettlement and expulsion. The central section, the *Generalgouvernement*, separating the annexed territories and the Soviet controlled territories was to become an area populated by former Polish citizens who were to exist on a deliberately depressed standard of living and would provide a reservoir of cheap labour.²⁸

That the Lublin district of the GG became an early destination for the victims of the Nazi population engineering plans, headed by the SS, set in train ongoing jurisdictional conflicts between the civil administration and the SS.²⁹ A key development in population policy in Poland was the transfer by Hitler to Himmler of all authority for the organisation and implementation of the “ethnic new order” on 7 October 1939. Himmler was given the title of Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationalism (RKFDV), which initially was restricted to the areas to be annexed to the

²³ Longerich, *Himmler*, pp.485-6.

²⁴ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, pp.86 and 119.

²⁵ Wildt, *Generation*, p.231.

²⁶ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.129.

²⁷ Aly, *Final Solution*, p.15.

²⁸ Browning, *Origins*, p.106.

²⁹ Lower, ‘Living Space’, p.315. Baranowski, *Empire*, p.245.

Reich.³⁰ The overlapping of jurisdictions between the main German agencies in the occupied areas meant that the police battalions in the GG were in a position where they were operating under the executive authority of the civil administration under Frank, but were nominally operating within the SS and police chains of command. Three police battalions were stationed in each of the four districts of the GG and formed a district regiment under the command of a regimental commander (Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei – KdO) and were rotated from Germany on tours of duty. These battalions operated through two chains of command. The normal police chain ran from the battalion commander to the KdO, through the overall Orpo commander (Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei – BdO) in Cracow to Daluge's main office in Berlin. For operations that involved cooperation with other SS agencies, the battalion commander would report to the SSPF (Globocnik in Lublin), to the HSSPF in Cracow (Krüger) and finally to Himmler.³¹ Regardless of the clashes over authority, the police battalions in the GG and the annexed territories would become key organisations in the pursuit of Nazi racial policies, whether they were operating within SS jurisdictions or under the civil administration. For the first few months of the occupation, the police forces were largely concentrated on the pacification of the Polish countryside, which included the types of "cleansing operations" ordered by Himmler. However, by summer 1940 these units had become increasingly involved in "resettlement" actions.³²

Battalions 304 and 314 were deployed to the GG in September and December 1940 respectively. The arrival of Battalion 304 in Warsaw coincided with Frank's decision to approve a sealed ghetto in the city on 12 September. Throughout the period of resettlement in Poland, the police battalions had been heavily involved in the resettlement of ethnic Germans and the resulting displacements of hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens from their homes.³³ Battalion 314 was deployed to continue the enforcement of racial policy in the Lublin district, which had been the primary target deportation area in the GG, in December 1940. Like the arrival of Battalion 304, the arrival of Battalion 314 in Lublin also coincided with a newly conceived "short-term" plan. At the end of 1940, Heydrich had been developing a third short-term plan that was to involve the expulsion of 771,000 Poles (including a small percentage of Jews) from the incorporated territories to the GG in order to "accommodate" ethnic Germans from south-eastern Europe, and the deportation of 60,000 Viennese Jews.³⁴ It seems likely that Battalion 314, along with its other security duties, was supposed to be involved in the resettlement of these deportees.

³⁰ Aly, *Final Solution*, p.19.

³¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.7.

³² Westermann, *Police Battalions*, pp.147-51.

³³ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.149.

³⁴ Aly, *Final Solution*, p.128.

Battalion 304 in Warsaw

Police Battalion 304 arrived in Warsaw from Chemnitz in September 1940 around the same time that Frank officially approved a sealed ghetto in Warsaw. Part of the duties of the battalion in the Warsaw district was to provide “property protection” which included the guarding of industrial and military units, a train line and the accommodation barracks. “Gendarmerie posts” or bases were also set up in the rural areas, each of which was commanded by a platoon leader. In addition to the guard duties, the training that had begun in Chemnitz was continued in Warsaw.³⁵ During the West German trials of members of Battalion 304, a few former policemen mentioned the role of the battalion in the deportation of Jews from the district into the ghetto area, the sealing or closure of the ghetto in October 1940 and the role of the battalion as a guard unit of the ghetto from October 1940 to April 1940.³⁶

According to the diary of the leader of the Jewish council, Adam Czerniaków, on the same day that Frank approved a sealed ghetto, 12 October 1940, he was informed that: “Until October 31, the resettlement [into the ghetto area] will be voluntary, after that compulsory. All furniture must remain where it is”.³⁷ Presumably, the furniture as well as the Jewish homes were to be used by the Polish families moved out of the area that was to be ghettoised. Between early October and mid-November a massive, and as far as allocated space is concerned, unequal population exchange took place in which 700 ethnic Germans and 113, 000 Poles were moved out of the area and 138,000 Polish Jews were moved in.³⁸ Battalion 304 played a major role in the subsequent forcible expulsions of the Jewish population who had not already moved into the ghetto area from their homes. On one particular day, the entire 2nd Company of Battalion 304 entered the city to force Jewish families into the ghetto. Upon arrival the group leaders, with about fifteen subordinates each, were instructed to search each building that had presumably been identified as Jewish residences and take the inhabitants into the ghetto. One of these group leaders was Walter Hofmann of the 2nd Platoon. Hofmann entered the first apartment with one of his men, instructed the residents to pack the necessary possessions and leave the room. It is not clear how long the residents were given before they were forcibly removed, but Hofmann had left four members of his group to drive the people onto the street while he entered the next building. On that day fourteen people were evicted from their homes and escorted by Hofmann’s group all armed with rifles. Two or three days later Hofmann’s group again were involved in the deportation of people into the

³⁵ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1591. StA 120 Js, statements by Nabielek, 1975, p.888, Asmus, 1975, p.904, Becker, 1989, p.1326a Häschke, 1980, p.1342.

³⁶ Curilla, *Polen*, p.553. StA 120 Js, statement by Häschke, 1980, p.1342.

³⁷ Cited in Friedländer, *Extermination*, p.105.

³⁸ *Documents*, p.226. Lecture by Waldemar Schön.

ghetto. This time Hofmann's group escorted seven people from the Praga district of Warsaw.³⁹ It is very likely that Hofmann and his group were authorised to use their weapons should they have encountered any resistance, but the level of violence or abuse actually used during these particular evictions and deportations is not known.

The ghetto was sealed off on 16 November by a three metre high wall on which was mounted barbed wire. Initially the German police guarded the passages of the ghetto, but were later replaced by Polish policemen under the supervision of German police. The 87 man German guard under the command of a lieutenant was stationed in three posts outside the surrounding wall.⁴⁰ A total of fourteen entrance and exit points had to be constantly guarded by members of the battalion who were deployed inside and outside the ghetto. The primary job of the guard units was to arrest anyone who had left the ghetto without authorisation, those who were found outside without the required armbands, and those who tried to smuggle clothes, food, medicine or fuel into the ghetto; in short, material that would aid keeping the ghetto inhabitants alive. As group leader Hofmann would act as the officer on duty or as the deputy to a platoon leader with about fifteen men under his command.⁴¹ Another group leader in the same company, Karl Jäger, personally performed at least 25 guard duties between January and April 1941, during which time he ordered the arrest of at least 70 people.⁴² Other members of the 2nd Company were found to have taken part in up to 25 guard duties arresting an unknown number of people.⁴³ The several people known to have been arrested by members of Battalion 304 for not wearing the required armband were delivered to the battalion staff; but it is not known what became of them there.⁴⁴ Armed resistance from the ghetto was apparently not a factor that concerned the Germans in 1940 and 1941, with resistance being confined to social aid, cultural activities, illegal political meetings and the making of pamphlets.⁴⁵ Therefore, the policemen deployed at the ghetto were not operating in a situation which presented any real threat to their lives. As part of "self-help" resistance, there was large scale smuggling, which according to the diary of a former ghetto inhabitant, was carried out "through all the holes and cracks in the walls, through connecting tunnels in the cellars of buildings on the border, and through all the hidden places unfamiliar to the conqueror's foreign eyes".⁴⁶ Part of the responsibility of the policemen on guard duty was to contain the smuggling, an activity that probably accounts for the

³⁹ StA 120 Js, pp.1675-6.

⁴⁰ Curilla, *Polen*, p.552.

⁴¹ StA 120 Js, summary on Hofmann, 1975, p.1676.

⁴² StA 120 Js, summary on Jäger, 1981, p.1771.

⁴³ StA 120 Js, summaries on Hinsche and Huster 1978 and Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978.

⁴⁴ Curilla, *Polen*, p.533.

⁴⁵ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.170.

⁴⁶ Diary of Chaim Aron Kaplan in early 1941, cited in Friedländer, *Extermination*, p.148.

majority of arrests.⁴⁷ People with identifying permits were allowed to pass through the gates and it was part of the job of the guard unit to check the receipts for imported food to stop smuggling by this route.⁴⁸ According to the findings of Wolfgang Curilla, the actions of the German police guards at the entrances and exits could be arbitrary. Sometimes the policemen would brutally take all the food carried by the smugglers but there were also policemen who didn't appear to care what was being brought into the ghetto.⁴⁹ Many of the German and Polish guards accepted substantial bribes from smugglers who were then allowed to take extra food through the entrances by night.⁵⁰ According to Yisrael Gutman smuggling was for the most part tolerated and the measures taken against it were meant only to restrict its magnitude. "Sometimes a German sentry, moved by compassion or looking to relieve his boredom with an entertaining sight, would let a gang of children pass through the gate".⁵¹ There appear to have been a mix of attitudes among the policemen as guards of the ghetto. The multiple arrests of smugglers or even suspected smugglers made by policemen such as Karl Jäger suggest that there were some battalion members who were willing to act more severely in the enforcement of Nazi racial policy than others. The severity of the actions of the guards may have depended on the individual policeman or the commander of the guard unit.

As well as arrests, which in themselves were likely to have had brutal consequences for the victims, the policemen committed acts of violence, including killings of the ghetto inhabitants. German policemen often took young smugglers to the guard-rooms, took away everything they had on them and beat them severely.⁵² There were also regular shootings of mainly Jews but also of Poles committed by the German guards. Gutman also notes that "it was not rare for a German guard to shoot and kill children who tried to steal across to the other side".⁵³ Emmanuel Ringelblum noted that on several occasions smugglers were shot in the ghetto prison, and on one occasion there was a "veritable slaughter" of 100 people near Warsaw. Among the victims were Jewish children of between five and six years old, "whom the German killers shot in great numbers near the passages and at the wells."⁵⁴ It is not known how many people were killed by members of Battalion 304, but as one of the core guard units of the ghetto, it is likely to have been many. As well as pocketing

⁴⁷ StA 120 Js, summaries on Hofmann, 1975, p.1674 and Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, p.1752. Miksch was found to have arrested three women on the "suspicion" of smuggling.

⁴⁸ *Documents*, pp.227-8. StA 120 Js, summary on Hofmann, 1975, p.1674.

⁴⁹ Curilla, *Polen*, p.552.

⁵⁰ Curilla, *Polen*, p.552. Friedländer, *Extermination*, p.149.

⁵¹ Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw. Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp.69-71.

⁵² Curilla, *Polen*, pp.554-5.

⁵³ Gutman, *Warsaw*, p.70.

⁵⁴ *Documents*, p.229. Extract from Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* (1958).

bribes, it is known that some German policemen enriched themselves by engaging in violent robberies of ghetto inhabitants.

The conditions created by the Germans in the closed ghettos and the areas in towns assigned to Jews only were extreme. Because so many people were crammed into relatively small areas with wholly inadequate supplies, disease became rife and the death rate was high.⁵⁵ On 23 May 1941, an underground Polish newspaper published a description of the Warsaw ghetto conditions as they appeared from outside the walls:

Further crowding has resulted in conditions of ill-health, hunger and monstrous poverty that defy description. Groups of pale and emaciated people wander aimlessly through the overcrowded streets. Beggars sit and lie along the walls and the sight of people collapsing from starvation is common. The refuge for abandoned children takes in a dozen infants every day; everyday a few more people die on the streets. Contagious diseases are spreading particularly tuberculosis. Meanwhile the Germans continue to plunder the wealthy Jews. Their treatment of the Jews is always exceptionally inhuman. They torment them and subject them constantly to their wild and bestial amusements.⁵⁶

Battalion 304 participated in the forcible deportations of Jews into the ghetto, and then as guards, patrolling both outside and inside the ghetto walls, were well positioned to observe the results of the incarceration in which they took part. Some of the men personally profited from the situation by accepting bribes and by stealing. The above report was published in May just after the battalion had been deployed elsewhere, but from November 1940 to April 1941 as one of the guard units, the policemen of Battalion 304 were able to witness a continuous deterioration of conditions within the ghetto. The terrible conditions of the ghetto can to a considerable degree be attributed to a few individuals in the civil administration. In December 1940, the *Transferstelle* was created to act as an economic intermediary between the ghettoised Jews and the outside world which effectively had the power either to stimulate economic activity or strangle it. The latter course would lead to the starvation of the inhabitants. According to Browning the head of the Resettlement Division in the district, Waldemar Schön, who had created the *Transferstelle*, was more inclined towards the latter position. Schön's appointment of Alexander Palfinger as head of the *Transferstelle* who had been transferred from the Lodz ghetto administration because he didn't agree with the "productionist" direction taken there, appears to confirm this. Schön and Palfinger apparently accommodated the suggestion of Karl Neumann, the district head of the Food and Agriculture Division, in December 1940 to halt the supply of food to the ghetto for that month in order that the inhabitants would

⁵⁵ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.167.

⁵⁶ Cited in Friedländer, *Extermination*, p.147.

surrender their hidden money and use up the smuggled food.⁵⁷ This decision contributed greatly to the skyrocketing death rates which increased throughout the first half of 1941, a time period when Battalion 304 served as a guard unit, peaking at 5,560 deaths in August.⁵⁸

In March Dr Walter Emmerich at the Economic Division and his advisor Dr Rudolf Gater presented Frank with a memorandum on the economic viability of the ghetto and encouraged organisational changes to this end. This sparked off a debate between those termed by Browning as “attritionists” who effectively saw the dying out of the ghetto inhabitants as the desired goal, and the “productionists” who sought the (temporary) maximisation of the economic potential of the ghetto releasing the economic burden from the Reich.⁵⁹ Following a meeting in April a majority decision was reached which decided that efforts were to be made to put the ghetto on a productive footing and the economic administration was reorganised to these ends.⁶⁰ As a guard battalion and direct witnesses to the starvation of the ghetto inhabitants, the extent to which the men of Battalion 304 were aware of the differences in policy regarding the feeding of the inhabitants is unclear but they would certainly have been made aware of the decision to withhold provisions that led to the starvation of so many people.

In addition to guard duty at the ghetto, Battalion 304 were also involved in the guarding of work details which is likely to have included the guarding of the labour camps.⁶¹ In spring 1941 fifteen camps were opened in the Warsaw district for the purpose of water control projects using labour from the ghettos. The conditions in the camps were terrible and the treatment of the labourers brutal and when this became known to the ghetto inhabitants it became impossible to find volunteers and the authorities resorted to the impressment of labour; as a result of a large volume of complaints a delegation that included a Captain Meissner of the Schupo and a member of the Jewish Self-Aid Society visited some of the camps to report on the conditions.⁶² The report was made in May 1941 around the time that Battalion 304 is supposed to have ended its period of duty as a guard battalion at the ghetto. Commander of the 3rd Company of Battalion 304 was Captain Meissner. None of the company leaders of the other two battalions (308 and 301) that together with 304 made up the Police Regiment Warsaw were called Meissner so it appears likely that the man who made the report was Meissner of Battalion 304.⁶³ In his report Meissner admitted that the

⁵⁷ Browning, *Origins*, pp.121-6. Friedländer, *Extermination*, p.144.

⁵⁸ Browning, *Origins*, pp.158-9.

⁵⁹ Browning, *Origins*, p.113.

⁶⁰ Browning, *Origins*, pp.128-9.

⁶¹ StA 120 Js, summary on Hofmann, 1975, p.1674.

⁶² Browning, *Origins*, p.149.

⁶³ On Battalions 301 and 308 see Curilla, *Polen*, pp.557 and 672. All but one of the names of the company commanders from these battalions are known.

prescribed food rations had not been received in the camps and that brutality and corruption was common among the guards. However, he blamed the death rates on the unusually cold and wet weather and the “inferior human material” that had been recruited by the ghetto council: “One has the impression from the nature of the human material recruited for labour by the Jewish council, that the Jewish residential district perceives the work camps as an institution for disposing of its inferior elements”.⁶⁴ Meissner appears to have taken a similar attitude to members of the district and ghetto administration in December 1940 that the inhabitants were holding out material and goods, in this case “human material” that could otherwise be appropriated by the German occupiers. Instead of recognising, as Browning points out, that after months of systematic starvation there were unlikely to be many strong and healthy workers left in the ghetto, Meissner appears to have adopted a brutal attitude, informed by Nazi racial conceptions, towards the suffering of the ghetto inhabitants.

Another indication of the attitudes towards the ghetto inhabitants among the ranks of the police can be seen in the reaction of one of the battalion commanders at Warsaw to the suggestion made by the district doctor that the police units should be ordered ruthlessly to shoot anyone who tried to leave the ghetto without permission in order to combat the spread of typhus. The commander - it is not clear whether this was Major Nickel of 304 - vigorously opposed this proposal on the grounds that this would lead to the relaxation of discipline amongst his men and that he couldn't answer for the consequences.⁶⁵ This commander was probably aware of the brutality already demonstrated by some policemen as guards, and how this killing licence could potentially affect the men under his command. It is not clear whether objections such as this had any influence on the decision, but the death penalty for the unauthorised leaving of the ghetto was not decreed until October 1941, a couple of months after Battalion 304 had left the Warsaw district.⁶⁶

Battalion 314 in Lublin

Police Battalion 314 left Chemnitz after about six months of basic training on 14 December and arrived in Zamość in the Lublin district on 16 December 1940 where they stayed until the end of May 1941.⁶⁷ The battalion was one of three along with Battalions 306 and 307 that formed Police Regiment 25 in the Lublin district. The regiment commander (KdO) was based in the district capital, Lublin.⁶⁸ While in Zamość the training was continued, but the battalion was also involved in

⁶⁴ Browning, *Origins*, p.149.

⁶⁵ Curilla, *Polen*, p.555.

⁶⁶ Browning, *Origins*, p.160.

⁶⁷ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Hestermann, 1947, p.1271.

⁶⁸ Curilla, *Polen*, p.698.

“practical” duties. These included the guarding of military units, bridges and factory installations, guarding and patrolling the isolated Jewish area in the city and rounding-up forced labour for the labour camps in the area. Sub-units of the battalion were deployed for combatting local resistance.⁶⁹ The Lublin district, following the initial plan of a Jewish reservation, had become the destination for many of those deported from the incorporated territories. The battalion arrived at a point in the evolution of the resettlement and deportation policies during the development and attempted implementation of the third short-term plan.

By December 1940, the Madagascar Plan was no longer being mentioned as a viable option; instead the destination of the planned Jewish expulsion was now starting to be referred to as “a territory yet to be determined”. It was around this time, the winter of 1940-41, that two important policies were being finalised: the third short-term plan and the decision to invade the Soviet Union during the spring of 1941. In preparation for the latter, the Wehrmacht sent 2,500 train loads of troops and material into the GG between November 1940 and March 1941; a mass deployment that would effectively halt the implementation of the third short-term plan.⁷⁰ In January 1941, Heydrich informed HSSPF Krüger of the plan that had been decided during a meeting with Eichmann’s resettlement experts in December, to deport 831,000 people into the GG. This figure was to include 771,000 Poles including some Jews who had not been ghettoised, from the incorporated territories and 60,000 Jews from Vienna. On top of these figures, the army requested 200,000 people to be relocated to the GG in order to free up space for training areas. 238,500, including 10,000 Jews from Vienna were to be resettled by May 1941.⁷¹ Presumably, as Krüger had been informed, the police battalions stationed in the GG would have been briefed on the intended influx of deportees and are likely to have been primed to receive these people in their respective districts. As Zamość had already served as the destination for deported Jews from the incorporated territories, it seems likely that Battalion 314 was to play a role in the resettlement plans.⁷² However, practical obstacles once again proved insurmountable and the transports were stopped in March 1941. The primary obstacle turned out to be the incompatibility of the deportations and the troop movements and preparations for Barbarossa.⁷³ Nevertheless, between January and March 1941, nearly 26,000 people had been deported to the GG as part of the third short-term plan, including over 9,000 Jews.⁷⁴ The transports that did arrive in Zamość are likely to have been met by members of Battalion 314 which, as

⁶⁹ ZStL B162/6690, statements by Küster, 1947, p.1237 and Hestermann, 1947, p.1271. B162/6695, statement by Felbinger, 1974, p.2343.

⁷⁰ Browning, *Origins*, p.103. Aly, *Final Solution*, p.127.

⁷¹ Browning, *Origins*, p.99. Aly, *Final Solution*, pp.137-8.

⁷² Browning, *Origins*, p.462, (note 88).

⁷³ Browning, *Origins*, p.89.

⁷⁴ Browning, *Origins*, p.109.

described by a witness, would have involved a level of violence. The deportees from the incorporated territories had been forced to leave their homes then were “herded like cattle, pushed and beaten”.⁷⁵ As was the case in the Cracow and Radom districts, the ghettoisation of the Jews in the Lublin district followed a different pattern to that of Warsaw. Ghettos or allocated districts in towns for Jews were seen more as “transit” ghettos and were not usually sealed off like Lodz and Warsaw. Struggling with the demands of overpopulated cities, local authorities shifted Jews from the district capitals into the smaller towns where they were crowded into residential quarters.⁷⁶ With the creation of the Lublin ghetto on 24 March 1941, Jews in the city were given the option to leave the city with a few possessions rather than stay in the to-be-ghettoised area and go to one of the specified smaller towns in the district as there was only a certain capacity envisioned for the ghetto.⁷⁷ One of the towns that received an influx of Jews was Zamość. Zamość had a pre-war population of 12-14,000 Jews, of whom all but 3,000 fled to the Soviet territories with the outbreak of the war. However, these people were replaced by 8,000 Jews deported from the incorporated territories and by Jews from the neighbouring villages.⁷⁸ The extent to which Battalion 314 participated in the rounding-up of Jews from the neighbouring areas, which was done by the German police, is not clear. A main task of the battalion was to guard the Jewish population in the residential area designated as the Jewish quarter in Zamość.⁷⁹ Very little information emerged from the post-war investigations regarding the actions of members of Battalion 314 while guarding the Jewish area other than the role played in the enforcement of restrictions placed on the Jews by the German occupation authorities. One policeman of the 3rd Company recalled that Jews were not permitted on the streets of Zamość after 7pm and that “fines were imposed for infringements” of this decree.⁸⁰

In addition to their role in the expulsions and deportations, and the guarding of ghettos, the police battalions played a key role in seizing or conscripting Polish citizens for forced labour in the Reich and GG.⁸¹ Aside from the 30,800 Jews who were sent to the Reich for forced labour, during 1940 and 1941 9,371 Jews from the Radom district, 7,453 from Warsaw, 5,436 from Cracow and 7,106 from POW camps were sent to labour camps or ghettos in the Lublin district.⁸² Members of Battalion 314 are known to have served as guards at a labour camp in Lublin, but it seems likely that they would

⁷⁵ Diary of Zygmunt Klakowski, cited in Baranowski, *Empire*, p.247.

⁷⁶ Curilla, *Polen*, p.686. Browning, *Origins*, p.131.

⁷⁷ Browning, *Origins*, p.136.

⁷⁸ Browning, *Origins*, p.462, (note 88).

⁷⁹ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Küster, 1947, pp.1237-8.

⁸⁰ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Hestermann, p.1272.

⁸¹ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.152.

⁸² Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.167. Curilla, *Polen*, p.686.

also have performed the same duties in the Zamość area where the battalion was based.⁸³ It is also known that the battalion played a role in the round-up of Jewish labour. According to Westermann, the police were used to conduct raids to in the GG and annexed territories to identify and collect “work-shy” Jews and non-Jewish Poles for forced labour.⁸⁴ Battalion 314 conducted one of these sweeps of the Zamość area in May 1941.⁸⁵ The Jews who were caught up in these raids and placed in camps were given harsh accommodation and completely inadequate food, so the death rates in the camps were high.⁸⁶ Three graduates of the Berlin-Köpenick officer school appear to have been acting in the fore of “anti-partisan” activities of Battalion 314. Jahnhorst appears to have joined the 1st Company straight from the officer school as platoon leader on 1 October 1940 while the battalion was still in Vienna. Bauer arrived in Zamość in early-January 1941 just after his course. Both men became leaders of “hunting platoons” (Jagdzüge).⁸⁷ In July 1940, Daluge ordered the formation of “police hunting platoons” for the conduct of “special tasks” to be performed in the GG. Initially eight *Sonderkommandos* of 42 men each from the Berlin and Münster districts were formed and were divided between the four districts. Instructions were given that the men comprising the platoons had to be “good marksmen” and each platoon was supplied with special equipment that included long-handled spades and hoes.⁸⁸ Jahnhorst and Bauer appear to have led similar units formed out of the ranks of Battalion 314. Bauer stated that: “In Zamosc we were occasionally assigned to combat gangs through the civilian administration. They were also known as “hunting platoons”, to which some of the members of my company belonged: especially those who spoke Polish”.⁸⁹ Jahnhorst, who appears to have lived in East Upper Silesia as a youth may well have had a command of Polish and may have been considered an ideal leader of one of these special units. That these units were to be equipped with a number of drivers and a number of spades and hoes, presumably for the digging of pits, suggests that these units may have split into smaller mobile execution squads.

During the post-war trials Bauer admitted that within the first weeks of his arrival at the battalion in Zamość, “as the newest lieutenant” he was assigned the task as leader of an execution squad. According to Bauer, this action involved the execution of “two bandits that had been sentenced to death” as they were found to be “guilty of robbing and murdering their own country people”.⁹⁰ That these types of units, as conceived by Daluge, were to be led by one officer and that they were likely

⁸³ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Felbinger, 1974, p.2343.

⁸⁴ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.152.

⁸⁵ Curilla, *Polen*, p.826.

⁸⁶ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.161 and p.167.

⁸⁷ ZStL B162/6693, statements by Jahnhorst, 1973, pp.1840 and 1849 and Bauer, 1973, pp.1792-1822.

⁸⁸ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.160.

⁸⁹ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Bauer, 1973, pp.1794-1822.

⁹⁰ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Bauer, 1973, p.1812.

to have split into smaller units, suggests that as a lieutenant, it seems more likely that Bauer passed the guilty verdict himself and led the firing squad. Being involved in a “hunting platoon” does not appear to have hurt Jahnhorst’s career aspirations, as according to former battalion members, he was promoted to company commander while the battalion was still in Zamość.⁹¹ As a platoon leader in the 1st Company, Hertel was also involved in leading anti-partisan expeditions. On 9 May 1941 Hertel led a group of 45 policemen of 3rd Company in an action to arrest members of the Polish resistance movement in the Lublin district together with a unit from Battalion 306. Nine people were arrested during this action and were handed over to the local SD; Hertel’s report does not mention any executions or police casualties.⁹² As officers and the leaders of these sub-units, Jahnhorst, Hertel and Bauer were afforded a significant level of autonomy in the field in actions that probably involved executions such as those carried out by Bauer.

Experience and training

The aspects of the training that Battalions 304 and 314 received immediately before their deployment meshed with the experiences of the men in Poland. Considering the widespread cultural imperialism and conceptions of the “east” propagated through popular culture and then as part of the basic training, it seems likely that conceptions of cultural and racial superiority also existed in the consciousness of the newly recruited policemen before their entry into Poland. The staging of “colonial training” for the police in Poland, police pamphlets such as the one titled “Germany’s right to colonies” and the general colonial themed aspects of the training may well have found fertile ground in the men’s imaginations. In addition these conceptions can only have been bolstered by the opportunities afforded the policemen to think and act as imperial masters over a racially inferior native population. In a letter written in November 1940, a Wehrmacht private expressed his amusement at the deference shown to him by the local population: “it really is comical: the Jews all salute us, although we don’t respond and aren’t allowed to. They swing their caps down to the ground. In fact, the greeting is not compulsory, but as a remnant from SS times; that’s how they trained the Jews”.⁹³ The doffing of caps, stepping off pavements to allow a uniformed German to pass, the emptying of shops on a German’s arrival, may well have provided a heady experience for a relatively young man who shortly before may have been an ordinary painter, mechanic or unemployed. The brutal deportation of Poles and Jews and the incarceration of Jews in extreme conditions in conjunction with the planned resettlement of ethnic Germans experienced by

⁹¹ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, p.1854.

⁹² BAB R20/51, pp.49-53. Telegram from Major Kintrup of Polizei-Regiment Lublin to Battalion 314 dated 7 May 1941 and a series of telegram reports from Steinmann and Hertel of Battalion 314 from 7 to 9 May 1941.

⁹³ Cited in Friedländer, *Extermination*, p.107.

the policemen in Warsaw and Zamość would have provided an immediate illustration of the beginning of a reordering of central Europe based on notions of a racial hierarchy; notions that are bound to have featured in the training. The militarisation of the police appears to have reaped benefits during the Polish campaign when police units became engaged with parts of the Polish army. The extent to which the combatting of “resistance” by units such as those led by Jahnhorst, Hertel and Bauer were of a “military” nature is unclear. Regardless, as Rossino has argued, the militarisation of the SS and police units came into play in killing actions as the murders could be couched in terms of military necessity.⁹⁴ Repeated use of the terms “franc-tireurs”, “bandits” and “gangs” are illustrative of these types of legitimisation. However, these justifications could not have been used at the Warsaw ghetto in connection with combatting “illegal” exits, stopping smuggling and the prevention of the spread of disease.

The extent of antisemitic messages as part of the basic police training is unclear, but it seems likely that the content probably didn’t differ greatly from the types of messages presented to the German people as a whole. The German policies in Poland and antisemitic messages created a “self-fulfilling prophecy” in which the appearance and behaviour of the Polish Jews lived up to the Nazi stereotype of a disease-ridden society given to “illegal” activities such as smuggling.⁹⁵ The fact that the conditions in the Warsaw ghetto, as witnessed and exacerbated by members of Battalion 304, were a result of German occupation policies, may well have been lost on at least some of the policemen serving there as guards; if the attitude taken by Captain Meissner is any indication. The close proximity of the guards to the suffering and death did deter at least some of the policemen in adding to the suffering by beating and murdering some of the inhabitants.

It is not clear how many murders of Jews were committed by members of Battalions 314 and 304 while in Poland. One aspect of the training of Battalion 304 in Poland afforded an opportunity for the more enthusiastic members to engage in the killing of unarmed people. In January 1941 a commando of about fifteen men from Battalion 304 was selected and sent from Warsaw to Cracow for a three day course. Here the delegates were to be trained in the theory and practice of how to kill. Initially the group were given theoretical instructions in killing people by shooting them in the back of the neck by an SS doctor. Then the group engaged in the “practical” aspect of the training which took place in the courtyard of the police buildings. Five victims at a time were brought out in front of the men who would do the shooting. They were made to kneel down facing a high wall then the participants shot them in the back of the neck with pistols. A total of 75 people were killed in this

⁹⁴ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.229.

⁹⁵ Browning, *Origins*, p.167.

way by the fifteen policemen. The victims were Jews, probably from the area. One of the policemen, who took part in this, murdering five people, was Arno Schumann who would become a group leader in 1943. Schumann had joined the Party and the SS in 1937 and admitted that he was chosen to attend this “special” training because he had excelled during NCO training. The names for the rest of the participants are not known, but, according to the post-war findings of the District Court in Halle, they were also chosen because of their “zeal”.⁹⁶ Schumann was not an officer, but it seems likely that the fifteen men were to act as “instructors” for the rest of the battalion. The fact that about fifteen men were sent to this training indicates that the battalion’s involvement in mass killing was anticipated. Of the younger officers in 304 that had recently attended officer school, only Streubel was with the battalion by January 1941 and it is not known whether he was part of this group. Why exactly this “training” was done at this time is unclear. The murders committed by members of Battalion 304 in Warsaw do not appear to have been officially authorised acts. There were discussions amongst the German administration in Warsaw regarding the authorisation of the shooting of unauthorised people leaving the ghetto, but the order did not come into effect until October 1941, well after the battalion had left Poland. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the execution practice would have been designed specifically for that reason. In the post-war trials of former members of Battalion 304 there are no mentions of any “hunting platoons” formed by sub-units, but this should not exclude the possibility that some were created. By January 1941, Himmler (and presumably Daluge) was aware of the plans to invade the Soviet Union and may well have already been anticipating a more “radical” approach to the “security” tasks of the SS and police units on Soviet territory. In any case, this training action provided an early opportunity for more radical elements within the battalion to come to the fore in killing activities.

Of the group of young, recently graduated officers identified in the previous chapter, only Hertel, Jahnhorst and Bauer of Battalion 314, and only Streubel of Battalion 304 were with their units in Poland. Already in Poland, as platoon leaders these men were afforded the opportunity to put into practice the theoretical elements of the training received at Berlin-Köpenick. Bauer and Hertel are known to have spent time at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp as part of their training and would have witnessed and likely been instructed on the methods employed at the camp, which included executions. The number of deaths and level of brutality occurring at the camp would have contributed to the preparation for their experience at the brutal forced labour camps in Zamość. Trained as “educators” and “cultivators”, they may well have passed on some of the lessons learned from the camp administrators in Sachsenhausen to the men in their platoons and companies. Some

⁹⁶ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1591. Curilla, *Polen*, p.553.

of the key themes of their training are likely to have been employed in practice by Bauer and Jahnhorst as leaders of the “hunting platoons”. As leaders of these mobile units, they would have been afforded the scope to use their initiative and to demonstrate the activism that were emphasised in training. The sentencing of “bandits” to death on the spot by the “hunting platoons” is likely to have involved a use of the flexible Nazi conception of “law” as conveyed during the training course. As educators responsible for the training and cultivation of the men under their command, the worldview framework would have been employed in the lessons or “gatherings” to rationalise or legitimate the events and policies in which the men of the battalion were engaged.

SS and police courts as a means of cultivation

Another educational device employed by the battalion officers was the threat of the SS and police courts. From October 1939, with the assumption of the judicial system of SS and police courts, breaches of conduct would be dealt with internally within the SS organisation. Himmler reserved for himself the power to suspend or confirm sentences related to cases involving SS leaders and police officers. Cases dealing with the lower ranks would usually be dealt with by Himmler’s subordinates, but he wished to be personally informed of all cases that involved actions contrary to “ideological obedience”, which included sexual offences.⁹⁷ For SS and police units in occupied Poland, private contact with the Polish civilian population was forbidden. Particular emphasis was placed on the prohibition of sexual contact with Polish women; an offence that would result in the offender being put in front of an SS and police court and discharged if found guilty.⁹⁸ In a post-war statement, one former member of the 3rd Company of Battalion 314 related an incident that occurred in Zamość to a fellow company member and roommate named Guist. “Guist was said to have written a letter to a Jewish girl which was probably found by the Gestapo. Any communication with Jews was forbidden...One morning Guist was suddenly called to the office and from there was taken away. The men assumed that he was taken to a penal company or something like that. He didn’t return to the company. I never saw or heard of Guist again”.⁹⁹ Clearly the SS hierarchy, and probably Himmler in particular, were concerned that the ordinary policemen would enter into relationships with local women and were more than ready to take action to stop this happening. However, the same level of concern does not seem to have been applied to cases of killings, unless these actions involved another element that was contrary to the SS code of conduct. In a speech to Gauleiters and other

⁹⁷ Longerich, *Himmler*, pp.486-7.

⁹⁸ Mallmann, ‘Ordnungspolizei in Polen’, p.76.

⁹⁹ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Dignas, 1976, p.2578.

members of the Party hierarchy in February 1940, Himmler responded to concerns raised regarding atrocities committed by SS and police units in Poland:

I don't deny it at all – in fact, I'm well aware of it – that here and there in the east excesses have occurred, shooting where people were drunk, cases where people may well have deserved to be shot but shouldn't have been shot by someone who was drunk, where looting has occurred throughout the east in a manner that I must say I didn't believe possible...if I've been informed by a few Gauleiters that police sergeant so-and-so has sent some parcels home, I'm very grateful for that. We shall note it and deal with the man.¹⁰⁰

Clearly Himmler did not want, or did not want to be seen to allow his men to be running amok in the east. That killings were frequent was not the issue; but the manner or circumstances in which the killing were done, if they involved drunkenness, looting or any other breach of “decent” behaviour, were issues to be addressed. According to Matthäus, sentences given by SS and police courts to men who killed through a lust for murder while deployed in the east were rare and, and where there were guilty verdicts found, they were often softened by Himmler or converted to a period of probation.¹⁰¹ With regards to the lower-ranking policemen, whether or not the offenders were to be taken to the courts is likely to have depended on the discretion of their immediate commanding officers. While on guard duty at the Warsaw ghetto it appears that three members of Battalion 304 shot and killed Jews. The KdO Warsaw, Lieutenant Colonel Petsch, requested Deckert, the battalion commander in Ukraine, to send the three men back for questioning.¹⁰² In his post-war testimony, former Battalion member Wolf, one of the three men implicated in this case, gave a different version of events: “Two battalion members were supposed to have beaten to death Poles or Jews. They also robbed them...Nickel [battalion commander in Chemnitz and Warsaw] ordered a search and sent the two men to the SS and police court in Berlin”. According to Wolf, Deckert stood up for the two men, organised for them to be brought back to the battalion in Kiev and had them “promoted out of turn”.¹⁰³ It appears to be the robbing of the victims that was the decisive act in determining the attempts to bring the perpetrators to trial, not necessarily the killings themselves. Whether or not the policemen were taken from Warsaw to Berlin, or later requested to be returned to Warsaw or Berlin from Ukraine, Deckert's attitude towards the killing of Jews is more than evident in a letter to Petsch from Ukraine after the battalion had been involved in the shooting of thousands of Jews: “As unit commander, I couldn't possibly give an order today to shoot 10, 50, 100,

¹⁰⁰ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.465.

¹⁰¹ Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, p.84.

¹⁰² Curilla, *Polen*, p.555. Klemp, ‘Ganz Normale Männer, ganz gewöhnliche Leben, ganz übliche Ermittlungen?’ in Schulte (ed.), *Die Polizei*, p.190.

¹⁰³ StA 120 Js, statement by Wolf, 1976, p.1024.

600, 1,000 yes even 5,000 Jews at once, and the next day send the same *Wachtmeister* for questioning because on one occasion in Warsaw he shot a Jew".¹⁰⁴

The responsibility for the enforcement of Himmler's ideals of the SS-code through the threat of SS and police courts lay to a considerable extent in the hands of the company and platoon leaders. Some officers in those positions may have taken a more relaxed attitude towards offences than others. One former member of the 2nd Company of Battalion 314 recalled that while in Vienna he was heard making a derogatory comment about Hitler and was to be sent to be tried, but Wendorff, the company commander got him off.¹⁰⁵ It seems likely that this was a self-serving story told in post-war proceedings in order to distance the individual from any ideological or "base" motive for the later killings in Ukraine. However, it is significant that the former policeman cited Wendorff as an officer who would take a softer line on enforcing the "code", even though Wendorff was himself a member of the SS. Bauer, on the other hand, appears to have used the SS and police courts more vigorously. Trained as an educator and cultivator of the Nazi worldview and SS ethics at Berlin-Köpenick, Bauer may well have used the SS and police courts to enforce the code of behaviour for his subordinates. In his biography of Himmler, Longerich argues that the extent of Himmler's involvement in the prosecution of offences committed by SS and policemen reflected his pedagogic mentality. The tough actions taken through the SS judicial system against sexual offences, offences linked to alcohol and property crime were all elements that he sought to eradicate through education and training.¹⁰⁶ According to the post-war testimonies of former members of the 2nd Company, Walter Dietz shot himself on 5 May 1941 in Zamość because Bauer had harassed the policeman by threatening him with the SS and police court, even though Dietz had protested his innocence.¹⁰⁷ The nature of the "offence" committed by Dietz is not clear, but it does appear that Bauer may have taken his role of "cultivator" seriously and sought to encourage aggressively these values in his troop through the mechanism of the SS judicial system.

Conclusion

By the time Battalions 304 and 314 arrived in Poland in September and December 1940 respectively, conditions had been established in which experiments with brutal mass population movements, brutal and murderous improvised solutions were occurring amid a general atmosphere of permissiveness of violence towards the civilian population. Many of the Germans entering Poland from September 1939 onwards brought with them common and long-established conceptions of the

¹⁰⁴ Klemp, 'Ganz Normale Männer', p.190.

¹⁰⁵ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Laumeier, 1974, p.2439.

¹⁰⁶ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.488.

¹⁰⁷ ZStL B162/6695, statements by Kempkes, 1974, p.2228 and Fußel, 1975, p.2427.

cultural and racial inferiority of the people occupying the areas to be colonised. The alignment of those who were considered to be members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, by way of their racial credentials, and those who were not, was violently and radically implemented by the German occupiers. In the policies of attempted homogenisation, expulsion, deportation, discrimination and murder of sections of Polish society would become an everyday experience for those involved.¹⁰⁸ In 1939 and 1940 in Poland, certain structural alignments were established within and between the key occupation agencies. Brutal mistreatment and organised killings of the civilian population outside of the *Volksgemeinschaft* by the SS agencies, army and members of the civil administration were commonplace.¹⁰⁹ The use of disproportionate retaliatory and punitive measures sanctioned by the army commanding officers contributed greatly in creating an atmosphere of violent permissiveness; actions that continued well beyond the subsidence of actual civilian resistance.¹¹⁰ The frictions that appeared between the SS and army leadership and to an extent the civil administration seem to have been based on concerns for some in the army on the effect of such violence on discipline and jurisdictional authority. On the whole, however, as Rossino has noted, the seeds of successful collaboration between the army and the SS were sown in Poland and would continue over to the invasion of the Soviet Union; the police battalions were able to operate in collaboration with each of the three agencies.¹¹¹ Army concessions to the SS established a chain of command outside of the army and civil administration and gave concessions that facilitated the use of court-martials by the SS and police units. These developments, combined with the establishment of a separate jurisdiction for the SS and police courts, gave the SS apparatus a significant measure of autonomy in establishing the parameters of permissible behaviour within the SS and police ranks.

Several recent studies have sought to narrow distinctions between the murderous population policies in Poland from 1939 to 1941 and the extermination policies that followed with the invasion of Soviet territories.¹¹² Longerich in particular has emphasised the murderous intent of plans for the deportation of Jews as conceived by SS organs as well as the significance that, even though the ghetto “productionists” temporarily won out, the possibilities of annihilating the inhabitants were considered. Browning agrees with Longerich in that Poland marked a watershed in the genocidal imaginations of Nazi policy makers, although the decisive “leap” from murderous expulsion to systematic murder was taken months after the invasion of the Soviet Union.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Mallmann, ‘Ordnungspolizei in Polen’, p.82.

¹⁰⁹ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.161.

¹¹⁰ Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.231. Friedländer, *Extermination*, pp.188-9.

¹¹¹ Rosino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p.120.

¹¹² See the discussion in Stone, *Histories*, p.75.

¹¹³ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.153 and pp.166-7. Browning, *Origins*, pp.431-3.

Outside of the Nazi hierarchy and policy makers, a radicalisation of the “direct perpetrators” on the ground can be traced through the events in Poland. Battalions 304 and 314 were directly engaged in the prosecution of Nazi policies in Poland and played a significant role in expulsion and deportations, guarding of ghettos and isolated Jewish quarters, the enforcement of discriminatory decrees, seizure of forced labour and the guarding of the labour camps. These men witnessed the high mortality rates in the ghettos and the labour camps after having taken part in placing people in these situations. For the rank and file of the battalions, the impact of their training, which was continued beyond basic training, should be related to the context of their early experiences in Poland. The colonial and antisemitic aspects of the ideological schooling would have been more effective when combined with the everyday experience of the individual being able to behave as a member of the master race and *Volksgemeinschaft* towards the native inhabitants. From the perspective of the guards, the conditions forced on the ghetto inhabitants and people in the labour camps may have conformed to the stereotypes abundant in Nazi propaganda as well as training. A significant aspect of the training that does not appear to have come to fruition in Poland was the extensive military training received by members of the battalions. The atmosphere of permissiveness and radicalisation exceeded anything the policemen would have experienced in Germany either as civilians or policemen. Death and brutality became an everyday experience, but the men’s actions were not without limits. Boundaries were set for behaviour that was to conform to the SS code and enforced by the threat of the SS and police courts. Individuals or small groups appear to have been involved in killing, but there do not appear to have been any occasions in Poland in which units of the battalions were engaged in mass killing. There still may have been concerns among the police ranks of the effect unbound killing would have on the discipline of the men; concerns were illustrated by the commander at the Warsaw ghetto regarding the discussions of a killing order. By the time the battalions were deployed in Ukraine, not all of the men or even the majority had killed or been directly involved in killing. However, some did even though they were not required to. The occupation climate in Poland afforded opportunities for radicals or enthusiasts to come to the fore.¹¹⁴ This is reflected in the different attitudes and actions displayed by the German guards at the Warsaw ghetto; apparently, only some policemen engaged in the shooting, beating, torture or robbing of the ghetto inhabitants. Another opportunity for the more enthusiastic members of Battalion 304 can be seen in the killing practice training held in Cracow, where men were specially chosen because they had demonstrated a level of “zeal” for it.

¹¹⁴ See Klemp’s arguments in *Vernichtung*.

Few of the group of young, recently graduated officers that would be with the battalions in Ukraine were with their units in Poland. Jahnhorst and Bauer of Battalion 314, appear to have been immediately involved in leadership roles in the “hunting platoons” and Hertel also led a mobile sub-unit. These positions would have afforded them the opportunity to display or put into practice some of the qualities that the training at the Berlin-Köpenick school was designed to instil, such as the use of initiative, leading from the front and a conception of “law” (in sentencing “bandits” to death on the spot) as expressed through the Nazi worldview. Another role envisioned for the officers at the training school was as educators or cultivators of the worldview. In Poland the lessons or gatherings that were to be led by the officers on ideological topics would have resonated far greater whilst the recipients were actively engaged in the prosecution of policies that were rationalised through ideological tenets. As cultivators, these officers also used the threat of the SS and police courts as a mechanism for installing the SS code in their subordinates; a method that Bauer appears to have employed aggressively. The extent to which these young officers were directly involved in killing and brutality already in Poland is unclear, only Bauer is known to have been involved in an execution. However, the organisation, supplies and tasks of the “hunting platoons” suggests that at least Bauer and Jahnhorst were involved in other killings. It is impossible to assess the readiness of the battalion members as murder units while still in Poland, as the units were not ordered or required to be involved in such actions. However the emergence of some radical elements within these units suggest that at least some men could have been relied on to lead from the front. The significance of the Poland experience will be further examined after assessing the mass murders that the battalions were involved in shortly after leaving Poland for Ukraine.

Chapter 4. Police Battalion 314 and the Early Massacres in Volhynia

Police Battalion 314 was deployed as the 3rd Battalion of Police Regiment South under the command of HSSPF Russia South Friedrich Jeckeln in Ukraine less than a month after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Operating in the Kovel area of Volhynia from 14 July to 1 September 1941, the sub-units of the battalion were directly involved in some of the earliest actions of mass killing perpetrated by Orpo and other mobile killing units in Ukraine in the areas already overrun by the advancing German army. During this period, the battalion was separated into a number of sub-units spread out over the Kovel area. These sub-units, usually at company or half-company strength, perpetrated a number of massacres of Ukrainian Jews in various small towns and villages. Some of these actions were organised and led by junior officers who were often the only officer present.

Alexander Kruglov has estimated that just before the invasion on 22 June 1941, there were approximately 2.7 million Jews living in the territory of what is now Ukraine. Of this number, 900,000 escaped the German advance with the retreating Red Army during summer 1941 and about 100,000 survived the following German occupation. Over 1.6 million of the pre-invasion Jewish population were killed by the Nazis and their accomplices, the vast majority of these victims were killed close to their homes.¹ Nearly 500,000 of this total were killed during the second half of 1941 by the units under Jeckeln's command (accounting for approximately 300,000 victims), including Battalions 314 and 304, and by Einsatzgruppen C and D, largely in areas still under military administration.² However, although massacres committed by German units were already taking place in late June and early July 1941, the larger massacres of entire Jewish communities did not occur in Ukraine until late August starting with the massacre at Kamenets-Podolsky; a number of larger-scale massacres followed after mid-September 1941. Initially the HSSPFs and Einsatzgruppen commanders appear to have received instructions only to execute certain groups of Soviet functionaries, especially targeting any Jews found amongst them.³ Therefore, to begin with, only a small section of the Ukrainian Jewish population was being targeted for execution. However, within a short space of time, the victim groups targeted were expanded by many units to include all Jewish males of military age in regionally isolated locations, usually with the exception of some skilled and specialist workers. Some units were also beginning to kill women and children in July, but the majority of the victims of the first two months following the invasion were Jewish males.⁴ The "watershed" moment came with

¹ Kruglov, 'Jewish Losses in Ukraine, 1941-1944', in Brandon and Lower, *Shoah*, pp.273 and 288.

² Kruglov, 'Losses', pp.279-80.

³ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.27.

⁴ Pohl, 'Ukraine', pp.27-32 and Matthäus, "Judenfrage", p.66. An earlier debate regarding the timing and nature of the orders received by the Einsatzgruppen between Helmut Krausnick and Alfred Streim in part revolved around the age and gender of the initial victims targeted immediately following the invasion of the

the Kamenets-Podolsky massacre of 23,600 Jews, including Polish, Czech and Hungarian Jews between 27 and 30 August which signalled a turning point from the targeting of mostly male Jews to the murder of all Jews regardless of age or gender by the SS-police forces in Ukraine. This shift is especially evident in Ukraine from mid-September 1941,⁵ although it appears that British Intelligence were able to discern a notable shift in the actions of the SS-police forces on former Soviet territory from late August following the massacre at Kamenets-Podolsky:

The execution of "Jews" is so recurrent a feature of these reports that the figures have been omitted from the situation reports and brought under one heading...Whether all those executed as "Jews" are indeed such is of course doubtful; but the figures are no less conclusive as evidence of a policy of savage intimidation if not of ultimate extermination.⁶

Any incredulity on the part of British Intelligence that the SS-police forces in the Ukraine were murdering so many Jews as "Jews" appear to have been dispelled by mid-September 1941:

The fact that the police are killing all Jews that fall into their hands should by now be sufficiently well appreciated. It is not therefore proposed to continue reporting these butcheries specially, unless so requested.⁷

The shifts in the targeting of groups of Jews that evolved before mid-September 1941 cannot simply be regarded as responses to explicit orders issued by Himmler, Heydrich, Daluge or Jeckeln, but rather, as Longerich has argued, the evidence suggests that these shifts occurred as part of a longer process in which unit leaders became progressively accustomed to the atrocities that they themselves and other unit leaders were committing.⁸ Indeed, much appears to have depended on the individual unit commanders and their interpretation of orders on the ground; the fact that before mid-September, not all units in the same areas started murdering women and children at the same time suggests that at this stage many unit commanders on the spot were left with a considerable degree of manoeuvrability as far as their use of initiative and of interpretation of

Soviet Union in June 1941. For the debate see 'Correspondance', in *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, 6 (New York: Allied Books Ltd, 1989), pp.311-47 and Helmut Krausnick, 'Hitler und die Befehle an die Einsatzgruppen im Sommer 1941', pp.88-106, Alfred Streim, 'Zur Eröffnung des Allgemeinen Judenvernichtungsbefehls Gegenüber den Einsatzgruppen', pp.107-19, and 'Diskussion', pp.120-24, in Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer (eds.), *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Entschlußbildung und Verwirklichung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1985). Krausnick argued that the Einsatzgruppen commanders received a "Führer Order" from Heydrich to kill *all* Jews in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union prior to the invasion. Streim argued that as a rule only Jewish men of "draft age" were targeted before August 1941 and that the Einsatzgruppen commanders probably received an order to extend the killings to the elderly, women and children some weeks after the initial invasion between early August and September 1941. Recent scholarship has tended to gravitate towards Streim's position that there was no comprehensive order issued prior to the invasion. For example see Browning, *Origins*.

⁵ Pohl, 'Ukraine', pp.31-2 and Kruglov, 'Losses', p.275.

⁶ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report covering the period 15.8 to 31.8.1941.

⁷ NA HW 1/35, GCCS report containing a department note dated 11 September 1941.

⁸ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.532.

orders or directions is concerned. This chapter will examine the roles of the junior officers as the commanders on the spot and their influence on the massacres from Battalion 314's arrival in Ukraine in mid-July up to the involvement of the battalion in the larger-scale massacres from mid-September 1941.

From 14 July to 12 September 1941 sub-units of Battalion 314 are known to have directly participated in at least thirteen separate massacres in the Kovel area and at least one action in the Vinnitsa area in September.⁹ During this period sub-units of the battalion were operating separately and it appears that most, if not all, of the above massacres were carried out by smaller units led by the junior officers. In the Kovel area: Jahnhorst, as 1st Company commander was in charge of the part of the company stationed in Luboml; Hertel, as second in command of the 1st Company, was in command of the other part of the company in Maciejow (Matseiv) and Bauer appears to have led the massacres by the 2nd Company in the Holoby area. In the Vinnitsa area in September, a massacre was carried out by the 3rd Company under the command of Panis. This chapter will examine the preparations and deployment of the battalion and the timing and nature of the first massacres in Ukraine and will attempt to analyse how these events relate to the broader events following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 with particular regard to the timing of the actions and the selections of victims. This chapter will also examine in some detail the actions of the sub-units of the battalion and the role of the junior officers in some of these massacres during the two month period from mid-July to mid-September 1941. It will be shown that these junior officers, often as the most senior Orpo officer present in the areas where the massacres were carried out by the policemen under their command, were operating in conditions that afforded them a significant level of autonomy in decision-making and organisation. From the available evidence, we can see elements of their officer training being put into practice in preparing and organising the perpetration of these massacres in Ukraine.

Deployment into Volhynia and instructions

Police Battalion 314 left Zamość and arrived in Tschenstochau (Czestochowa) on 21 June 1941. There is no information on what the battalion activities were in Tschenstochau in the weeks before their departure into Ukraine, but they are likely to have involved further training and preparations for their upcoming role. From Tschenstochau the battalion was deployed into Ukraine in mid-July, travelling separately from the other two battalions that formed Police Regiment South (Battalions 45

⁹ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, pp.2012 and 2033. StA 320 Js, File 1, report of pre-trial investigations, pp.57-61. NA HW 16/6, GCCS reports and periodic summaries. HW 16/63. HW 16/45 and Curilla, *Baltikum*, pp.791-92.

and 303).¹⁰ The Regiment staff section was initially stationed in Brody¹¹ but by early August had moved further east and was stationed with Battalions 45 and 303 in Ljubar.¹² It appears that the battalion was travelling in company strength, but all took approximately the same route from Tschenstochau to the Kovel area where the units arrived on 14 July, travelling through Lemberg (Lvov), Brody and Rovno.¹³ Once in Kovel, the battalion was stationed in separate towns across the area: the battalion staff and 3rd Company were stationed in the city of Kovel; the 2nd Company was stationed in Holoby, a small town that lies 26 km south of Kovel; the 1st and 2nd Platoons of 1st Company were stationed in Maciejow which lies about 25 km west of Kovel and the 1st Company staff with the 2nd and 3rd Platoons were stationed in Luboml, situated about 35 km west of Kovel.¹⁴ Therefore, on arrival the battalion was separated into four main groups spread out around the area assigned to the battalion and would remain separated in this way until it left for Vinnitsa on 1 September 1941. The battalion commander stationed in Kovel was Oberst Willy Dressler who had replaced Major Kahr in Zamość.¹⁵ On arrival in Kovel, only four of the junior officers and graduates of the Berlin-Köpenick officer school were with the battalion. Jahnhorst, as company commander, was in command of the half of the 1st Company stationed in Luboml; Hertel was in command of the other half of 1st Company in Maciejow; Bauer as deputy company commander was with the 2nd Company in Holoby under Company Commander Wendorff and Steinmann as battalion adjutant was stationed in Kovel with the battalion staff and 3rd Company.¹⁶ Curiously, Christ had been temporarily seconded to the Regiment staff on the march, where he would later serve as adjutant to Rosenbauer from August until his return to Battalion 314 later in 1941.¹⁷ In the Kovel area because of the separation of the battalion into sub-units, Jahnhorst, Hertel and Bauer would all find themselves in command positions during massacres on at least one occasion each from July to August 1941.

Luboml and Maciejow lie along the Lublin-Kovel railway line. Kovel is the largest town in the area and is estimated to have been home to about 15,000 Jews in mid-1941, Maciejow had an estimated 2,600 Jewish residents and Luboml is known to have had about 3,162 Jewish residents in 1937. Holoby, was the smallest town of the four and is likely to have had a smaller Jewish population in 1941. Between 23 and 28 June 1941 this area of Volhynia was occupied by the German military and

¹⁰ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2841. Curilla, *Polen*, p.826.

¹¹ NA HW 16/6, first identified as stationed in Brody on 17 July by GCCS.

¹² NA HW 16/45, GCCS report. Message from Jeckeln to Daluege dated 7 August 1941. Jeckeln was at this time based in Starokonstantinov.

¹³ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2911. *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*. Vol XLV (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), p.298 (JuNS).

¹⁴ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, p.2016. B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.2843 and 2856.

¹⁵ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2845.

¹⁶ ZStL B162/6693-6697.

¹⁷ *JuNS*. Vol XXVII (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), p.136.

a regional military administration (*Gebietsleiter*) subordinated to Army Group South was established.¹⁸ All Jews in the Kovel district deemed capable were put to work within the first weeks of German occupation and a number of measures were imposed on the Jewish populations, including the wearing of an armband, curfew and travel restrictions. Jewish councils were created in each town and the Jewish population were made to surrender all valuables.¹⁹ Through the Jewish councils, collective levies in the form of money, valuables and food articles were demanded to finance the construction or repair of roads, railways, bridges and buildings deemed to be necessary for the German war effort and occupation. These levies appear to have varied from place to place and were imposed at the discretion of the local German commander. It is known that at the beginning of the occupation 100,000 rubles were demanded from the Jewish population of Kovel and in July and August 1941, the period in which Hertel and part of the 1st Company occupied the town, 300,000 was demanded in Maciejow.²⁰ The killing of Jewish civilians of the Kovel district, with the assistance of the local Ukrainian militia, appears to have begun at the start of the occupation. In Kovel soon after the occupation 60-80 Jews from the intelligentsia were arrested and later shot.²¹ On 2 July 1941, five Jewish males were shot in Luboml by order of the *Ortskommandant* in front of the gathered Jewish men of the town in retaliation for the alleged cutting of a German telephone wire. It appears that the five men were randomly selected from the crowd that had been told to gather in the town square.²² One survivor who was present at the execution recalled one or more Germans saying “this will be a sign for you that we mean business”.²³ Whether or not the wire had actually been cut, this event was clearly arranged as a means to intimidate the Jewish population. It is significant that the Germans chose to punish the Jewish population only in retaliation for supposed sabotage even though it appears that the perpetrators, if indeed there actually were any, had not been found. This method and rationale appears to have been consistent with other actions carried out by German units during the early stages of the invasion of the Soviet Union and this sort of punitive and disproportionate reprisal action would get worse over time.

¹⁸ Alexander Kruglov and Samuel Schalkowsky, ‘Kowel’, in Geoffrey P. Megargee, Martin Dean and Mel Hecker (eds.), *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933-1945. Volume II: Ghettos in German Occupied Eastern Europe. Part B* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), p.1388. Kruglov, ‘Luboml’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, p.1410. Kruglov and Martin Dean, ‘Maciejów’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, p.1416. Schmucl Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews 1941-1944* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), p.46 and p.79.

¹⁹ USC Shoah Foundation Visual Archive Online [hereafter USCSF], testimonies by Bertha Reis, Sonia Orbuch and Nathan Sobel. Kruglov, ‘Luboml’, p.1410.

²⁰ Spector, *Volhynian*, pp.95-6.

²¹ Kruglov and Schalkowsky, ‘Kowel’, p.1389.

²² USCSF, Orbuch, Clara Posner, Sobel. ZStL B162/6649, pre-trial investigations ‘Final Report’, 1962, p.220. Kruglov, ‘Luboml’, p.1410.

²³ USCSF, Sobel.

As HSSPF Russia South, Jeckeln was to act as Himmler's representative in the field and had under his command Einsatzgruppe C, Police Regiment South and, in reserve, Police Battalions 304, 315 and 320.²⁴ Jeckeln's job was to coordinate the efforts of the units under his command with each other and the other agencies, including the mobile units of the Todt Organisation and the VoMi and in particular the Wehrmacht security divisions.²⁵ The tasks of the security divisions were to pursue the enemy and pacify the army rear areas and protect military installations; tasks that involved considerable overlap with those of the SS-police units.²⁶ The Einsatzgruppen were to advance rapidly in the wake of the army advance and were comprised of autonomous sub-units, Sonderkommandos and Einsatzkommandos, whose tasks were to secure centres of power in the towns and cities and terrain in the rear areas. Einsatzgruppe C was comprised of Sonderkommandos 4a and 4b and Einsatzkommandos 5 and 6.²⁷ During the early stages following the invasion of the Soviet Union, under the Wehrmacht administration there appears to have been a high level of cooperation between these agencies despite the crossovers in security tasks.²⁸ Himmler had made an agreement with the Wehrmacht command that on Soviet territory, the HSSPFs would receive logistical support from the Wehrmacht, but would receive instructions for "special tasks" directly from Himmler.²⁹ Einsatzgruppe C would receive orders from Heydrich and Müller in Berlin, but could also be coordinated by Jeckeln and regional military leaders. The Orpo units received few orders from Berlin, but instead received orders from Himmler's field command or Jeckeln.³⁰ The company and platoon commanders of Battalion 314 would receive their orders through the Regiment Commander Franz, then from September 1941, Rosenbauer, or Battalion Commander Dressler.

Pohl has pointed out that the police battalions assigned to Jeckeln were not deployed for investigative purposes or instructed to set up police stations; their tasks at the outset were not clear and depended largely on Jeckeln's instructions.³¹ One former member of the 2nd Company stationed in Holoby defined the tasks of the company at that time as "cleaning up of the army rear area of scattered Russian troops, recording and collecting of Russian prisoners and the carrying out of the pacification of the area assigned to the unit".³² A significant part of the security role of the police

²⁴ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.26.

²⁵ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.142.

²⁶ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.56.

²⁷ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, pp.162-3.

²⁸ Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, p.316.

²⁹ 'Directive for Special Areas relating to Instruction No.21 (Barbarossa)', in J. Noakes and G. Pridham (eds.), *Nazism 1919-1945 Vol.3 Foreign Policy, War and Racial Extermination. A Documentary Reader* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1988), Document 811, pp.1087-88.

³⁰ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.75.

³¹ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.26.

³² ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2916.

battalions was to pacify and protect the main transit routes as well as the major towns and cities. The way in which Battalion 314 was initially deployed illustrates this. From west to east, Luboml, Maciejow (both occupied by the 1st Company) and Kovel (3rd Company and battalion staff) are all located along a stretch of the main transit road and railway line connecting Lublin with Kovel. Holoby (occupied by the 2nd Company) had a main railway station and was situated on the main road running north-south connecting Kovel and Luzk. A daily report of British Intelligence dated 24 August 1941 while Battalion 314 was still in Kovel stated, "...Police Regiment South: traffic control and road protection as usual".³³ However, the pacification and security tasks of the battalion in the Kovel area included mass executions of Jewish civilians. It is not entirely clear where and when the units of the battalion received instructions to murder Jewish civilians in towns in the Kovel area as part of their security duties, or from whom.

On 2 July 1941, Heydrich issued orders to the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen which stated that, as well as targeting state functionaries and commissars, "Jews in party and state positions" and other "extremist elements (saboteurs, propagandists, snipers, assassins, agitators, etc.)" were to be executed.³⁴ This vague and imprecise order set the scope of those to be executed very wide and left much to the interpretations of the men who were to carry out these executions.³⁵ Copies of Heydrich's order were given to the HSSPFs, but it is not known how widely Jeckeln, for example, spread the order among the units under his command. As far as the security tasks of the SS-police forces in the elimination of potential political opponents are concerned, as Martin Dean has argued, the interpretation made by many unit and higher leaders is that Jews were automatically to be included in this category.³⁶ This is particularly evident in a report sent by Jeckeln to Himmler and Daluge dated 1 August 1941 detailing the recent activities of the 1st SS Brigade, including the shooting of: "73 Russian Soldiers (Guerrillas); 165 Functionaries and other persons who have rendered considerable service to the Bolshevist system, among them 4 women; 1658 Jews who have rendered considerable services to the Bolshevist system and who reported Ukrainians to Bolshevist rulers".³⁷ The association of Jews with Bolshevism served a common rationale of unit leaders for the execution of Jewish civilians, at first predominantly male, as partisans or partisan helpers, functionaries of the Soviet state, or as a target for reprisals, even though in Ukraine in mid-1941 there were few organised partisan groups.³⁸ Also included in Heydrich's order were the instructions

³³ NA HW 1/35.

³⁴ Noakes and Pridham, *Nazism*, Document 814, pp.1091-92.

³⁵ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.523. Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, pp.143-4.

³⁶ Dean, 'Gendarmerie', p.173.

³⁷ Wiener Library [hereafter WL], War Crimes Trials: document transcripts and other papers. Einsatzgruppen and HSSPF reports, 1726 – No 1165, 1 August 1941.

³⁸ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, pp.57 and 183.

to promote “self-cleansing” by anti-communist and anti-Jewish circles in the occupied areas.³⁹ In the whole of the Ukrainian SSR, according to Soviet documents, 8,789 prisoners were executed in the prisons during the Soviet retreat, killings that were associated with an exaggerated role of local Jews in the Soviet regime by Nazis as well as many Ukrainian locals and nationalist groups.⁴⁰ In addition to inciting or facilitating pogroms, at least some unit leaders used the atrocities as a rationale for killing large numbers of Jewish civilians. A report concerning the activities of Einsatzgruppe C in July stated: “...the main activity of Einsatzgruppe C was directed towards the liquidation of all Jews and Bolsheviks responsible for the murderous terror in these parts”.⁴¹ Reports of the NKVD killings were used to reinforce the racial stereotype of a horrific “Jewish-Soviet paradise” that had been brought to an end by the entry of the German troops. The *Schwarze Korps* referring to the NKVD murders insisted that each German soldier would return from the east as “a convinced antisemite, since over there he can see Israel as it really is”.⁴²

Like the rest of the units and agencies preparing for their involvement in the invasion of the Soviet Union, the policemen of Battalion 314 would have been subject to the preceding and accompanying Nazi efforts of legitimising a “war of annihilation” against Judeo-Bolshevism.⁴³ Ideological material given to the Orpo for training and lessons included essays linking the invasion with a German history of eastward migration and settlement and papers proclaiming Jews as the “world enemy number one”.⁴⁴ Instructions issued by Himmler’s staff for ideological lessons to be delivered by company and platoon leaders in July 1941 included instructions for lessons on the role of Jews and the Bolshevik state.⁴⁵ These types of messages were to be delivered by the unit leaders before and immediately after the invasion. One former member of the 2nd Company of Battalion 314 recalled Bauer giving an ideological lesson just prior to the invasion and, as it was part of their role as unit officers, it is likely that he and the other unit commanders passed on these training messages either as formal lessons or as part of informal discussions. During a farewell address to Police Battalion 322 (deployed as part of Police Regiment Centre) in Warsaw on 10 June, every policeman was extolled “to appear before the Slavic peoples as a master and show them that he was a German”. At an officers’ meeting of Police Battalion 309 shortly before its deployment in the central areas, the battalion commander disclosed verbally the Commissar Order and Barbarossa Decree, as would most likely have been the

³⁹ Noakes and Pridham, *Nazism*, Document 814, p.1092.

⁴⁰ Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.14. Wendy Lower, ‘Pogroms, Mob Violence and Genocide in Western Ukraine, Summer 1941: Varied Histories, Explanations and Comparisons’, *JGR*, 13, 3 (2011), p.226.

⁴¹ WL 1719 – No 2651, 31 July 1941.

⁴² Matthäus, “Judenfrage”, p.69.

⁴³ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, pp.136-40.

⁴⁴ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, pp.137-8. Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.58.

⁴⁵ Matthäus, Kwiet, Förster and Breitman (eds.), *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord?* Document 14, pp.198-9.

case with all other army and police units to be deployed in former Soviet territory.⁴⁶ These are the types of messages that were to be communicated to the rank and file by the company officers; the appeals to behave as a master race may well indeed have been a topic of one of Bauer's ideological lectures. Shortly before the deployment of Battalion 314, Major Kahr led an officers' meeting in Zamość. It seems likely that this was the moment, shortly before the invasion, that Kahr passed on the Commissar Order and Barbarossa Decree. Bauer and Hertel are known to have attended this meeting, probably along with the other battalion officers, including Christ, Jahnhorst and Steinmann. During the meeting Kahr is reported to have said: "Now in this situation, one will have so much power over life and death like never before".⁴⁷ This comment may have come on the back of a discussion over the interpretation of the Commissar Order and Barbarossa Decree, discussions that, in turn, the junior officers may have had with their subordinates if the orders were passed further down the chain of command. A former member of the communications platoon recalled that Steinman led a gathering of the battalion before departure for "Russia" in which he communicated a decree by Himmler that "all Jews capable of reproduction [*zeugungsfähigen*] from the age of thirteen, as well as the sick, were to be shot".⁴⁸ Whether or not this former policeman remembered the time and details of this assembly precisely, it is likely that the junior officers would communicate the results of the officer's meeting to their sub-units in similar assemblies. As battalion adjutant, the communications platoon could have been part of Steinmann's responsibility along with members of the staff administration, therefore, it would have been his job to communicate orders to them personally.

As was the case with Poland, the ideological preparations received by the battalion members and exhortations towards and licence for the use of extreme violence are likely to have resonated with many of the policemen when combined with their initial experiences on the ground. The route of the sub-units of Battalion 314 to the Kovel area went through Lemberg, Brody and Rovno. During early July 1941, just preceding the passing through of Battalion 314, units of Einsatzgruppe C had executed hundreds of civilians in Rovno, including "250 Bolshevik, predominantly Jewish officials, agents, etc." and 15 Jews as a reprisal for the murder of a Ukrainian nationalist leader; "The Ukrainian population on their part set the synagogue and houses belonging to the Jews on fire".⁴⁹ The interpretations of the NKVD atrocities and the pogroms committed by local civilians, along with the extreme violence and destruction instigated and committed by the German units themselves, must

⁴⁶ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp.11-12.

⁴⁷ *JuNS*. Vol XXVII, p.298.

⁴⁸ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Lettner, 1962, p.52.

⁴⁹ WL 1088 – No 2934, 'Operational Situation Report USSR, No 19', 11 July 1941. WL 1692 – No 2936, 'Operational Situation Report USSR, No 20', 12 July 1941.

have been a formative experience for many of the battalion members even before they reached their destinations in the Kovel area. These spectacles of violence, despite the fact that most of the violence was instigated and committed by German units, may have appeared to validate and reinforce the ideological preparations they had been receiving regarding depictions of the USSR as a dangerous, barbarous place and its inhabitants as savages.⁵⁰

However, the precise nature of the orders, instructions and preparations received by members of Battalion 314 prior to and during the invasion regarding the executions of Jewish civilians are unclear. In 1947 as a Soviet captive, a former member of the 1st Company in Battalion 314, Theodor Küster, recalled that as the battalion crossed the border into Soviet territory (giving the date of the battalion's entry into Ukraine as 21 July 1941), they received the order that the policemen were to "annihilate all Jewish civilians that they came across".⁵¹ However, it does not appear to be the case that the members of the police battalions that entered Soviet territory during the first few weeks were given any such order; regarding the police battalions, both Westermann and Browning agree that the police units received no general orders to annihilate Jews prior to the invasion. Former policemen who recalled such orders during post-war trials were likely either to be trying to shift responsibility for their actions to the obedience of higher orders, or were recalling the details of the Commissar Order or Barbarossa Decree interpreted in the light of later orders and actions.⁵² The fact that the first massacres of Jewish civilians by the SS-police units were directed mainly against members of the Jewish intelligentsia, Jewish communist officials and civil servants, targeted as the perceived potential organisers of resistance, strongly suggests that these units received no order to murder *all* Jewish civilians in Ukraine.⁵³ Rather, during the first weeks following the German invasion, the massacres show variations in the groups of victims targeted. As Longerich has shown, "some units set the upper age-limit of the male victims higher than others; in some places the entire male population in a particular age-group was murdered, in other places it was 'only' some, and here again to varying extents".⁵⁴ Therefore, if the initial massacres show some pattern in that the murder units targeted mainly Jewish men, the variations demonstrate that the unit leaders had considerable room for manoeuvre and use of individual judgement.⁵⁵ This follows Matthäus' view that the top Nazi leadership, at least at this early stage, regarded "more subtle calls for action, if received by eager activists" to be more effective than explicit orders that "could be counterproductive if they

⁵⁰ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.169.

⁵¹ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Küster, 1947, p.1238.

⁵² Browning, *Nazi Policy*, p.151. Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.183.

⁵³ Kruglov, 'Jewish Losses', p.274.

⁵⁴ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.526.

⁵⁵ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.526.

created confusion, stifled initiative, or did not correspond to the situation on the ground”.⁵⁶ Seen in this context, Küster’s testimony to Soviet interrogators may be more revealing. Küster mistakenly dated the entry of the battalion into Ukraine and the giving of the order to “annihilate all Jewish citizens” as 21 July 1941. It is known that the units of Battalion 314 arrived in the Kovel area on 14 July 1941. However, it appears that shortly after the units’ arrival there was an officers’ meeting held in Kovel, which seems likely to have taken place shortly after the arrival of the battalion in the area. Küster was a member of the 1st Company and was stationed in Maciejow under the command of Lieutenant Hertel, and it is known that a massacre of Jewish men by the units under Hertel’s command took place shortly after this officers’ meeting in Maciejow. Therefore, although he incorrectly dated the entry of his unit into Ukraine, Küster may have been recalling the transmission of Hertel’s interpretation of an order received at the officers’ meeting to the men under his command shortly before they perpetrated the massacre.

The 1st Company in Luboml and Maciejow

According to Hertel’s post-war testimony, shortly after arriving in the Kovel area an officers’ meeting took place at the battalion headquarters that had been established in the city of Kovel. Hertel stated that Jahnhorst, the 1st Company commander in Luboml, drove his second in command, Hertel, to this meeting which must have taken place sometime shortly after 14 July. According to Hertel, during the meeting the officers present were informed that over the next few days an SS-commando (in some post-war testimonies these were referred to as “SD-men”) with a special commission would be visiting the battalion sub-units in the various locations, but, according to Hertel, exact orders were not discussed. Dressler, the battalion commander, is said to have stressed that this commando was to be given all assistance by the policemen in their tasks.⁵⁷ A sub-unit of the *Einsatzgruppe zur besonderen Verwendung* (z.b.V.) is known to have been stationed in the town of Kovel in July and August 1941; a fact that the post-war prosecutors may not have been aware of.⁵⁸ Jahnhorst and Hertel claimed that shortly after this meeting, some “SD” men came to Luboml and Maciejow and organised the massacres that are known to have taken place in these towns and carried out by the policemen under Jahnhorst and Hertel’s commands indicating that they were not aware of the intended tasks before the arrival of the SD in each town. However, as will be shown below, the leaders of the SD-unit are very likely to have been present at the meeting in Kovel attended by

⁵⁶ Matthäus, ‘Controlled Escalation’, p.227.

⁵⁷ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2856. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.87. *JuNS*, Vol XLV, pp.298-301.

⁵⁸ Kruglov and Schalkowsky, ‘Kowel’, p.1388. A fifth Einsatzgruppe had been established in Cracow in early July 1941 and sent to eastern Poland which from August was named Einsatzgruppe z.b.V. See Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.185. Kovel was formerly part of Poland and was only just on the other side of the GG border.

Hertel and Jahnhorst. Therefore, the upcoming tasks were discussed in the meeting with Hertel and Jahnhorst present, along with a representative of the 2nd Company.

This meeting is supposed to have taken place at a time during which we can trace a level of direct intervention by higher level commanders on the actions of some of the police units on the ground. On 9 July, Daluge when speaking to members of Police Regiment Centre (PRC) called for “Bolshevism finally to be eradicated”, and on 11 July the commander of PRC passed on an order from the HSSPF that “all male Jews between the ages of 17 and 45 convicted as plunderers are to be shot according to martial law”.⁵⁹ British Intelligence intercepted this order and reported that the battalions of PRC (Battalions 316, 322 and 307) appeared to have “‘special duties’ ahead of them; this phrase last appeared in our decodes after the cleaning up of Poland, when participants were told that they were strictly to hold their tongues as to what their ‘besondere Aufgaben’ had been”. The intelligence officer also reported that in connection with this order, a request had been made to locate sound-film apparatus, “since these are needed to help the troops in face of their ‘special duties’”.⁶⁰ Part of the order issued by the PRC commander on 11 July stated that:

The battalion and company commanders are especially to provide for the spiritual care of the men who participate in this action. The impression of the day are to be blotted out through the holding of social events in the evenings. Furthermore the men are to be instructed continuously about the political necessity of the measures.⁶¹

The request for film equipment appears to have been to do with these considerations of looking after the “spiritual care” of the perpetrators. Shortly following these orders PRC reported on 17 July that it had shot “1153 Jewish plunderers” in the Slonim area.⁶² Just shortly afterwards direct orders regarding the shooting of Jews appear to have been issued to Police Regiment South (PRS). On 24 July the commander of Police Battalion 45, Major Besser, met with the commander of PRS, Colonel Franz, in Sheptovka and was told that by order of Himmler the Jews of Russia were to be destroyed and his battalion was to play a role in this task. Soon after this meeting, Battalion 45 committed massacres against the Jewish population in the Sheptovka area, including women and children.⁶³ On 28 July, Jeckeln had moved his headquarters to Sheptovka and may have had some personal influence on the actions of Battalion 45.⁶⁴ At some point between the departure of Battalion 314

⁵⁹ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.525. Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.12.

⁶⁰ NA HW 16/6. A note from this GCCS report dated 14 July 1941 stated that apparently the requested film equipment could not be found.

⁶¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, p.12.

⁶² NA HW 16/6, GCCS summary for period 3.7 to 14.8.41.

⁶³ Pohl, ‘Ukraine’, p.18. Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.90. In *Täter*, Welzer states that this meeting took place on 24 August, not July, and that the commander of Battalion 45 at the time was a Major Gutmann, p.118.

⁶⁴ NA HW 16/63, GCCS summary report ‘The German Police’ for the period 1939 to 1945, p.22.

from Poland and its arrival in the Kovel area, it does not seem unlikely that the battalion leadership had some form of contact with Jeckeln and perhaps, like Battalion 45, may have received verbal instructions from him either personally, via Franz or over the radio. From 11 July, Jeckeln had his headquarters in Lemberg, a city that lay on the route taken by Battalion 314 towards Kovel and it may have been the site of a meeting. Himmler appears to have met with Jeckeln in Lemberg on 21 July and issued some verbal instructions; Pohl states that it was around this time that Jeckeln ordered his forces to kill anybody suspected of having “abetted the Bolshevik system”.⁶⁵ This order from Jeckeln is not only still vague enough to allow interpretation on the part of the unit leaders, but also broader than orders targeting only male Jews between certain ages, such as those issued to the commander of PRC on 11 July.

It appears that units of Battalion 314 may have been carrying out massacres of Jews before 21 July; according to survivor Jacob Biber, the first massacre in Maciejow is supposed to have taken place on 18 July and the 2nd Company may have carried out a massacre in Mielnica as early as 16 July 1941.⁶⁶ Therefore, it seems likely that the battalion leadership received instructions, either from Jeckeln or another source, regarding the shooting of Jewish males before Jeckeln’s meeting with Himmler on 21 July. Regardless, it seems unlikely, given the flurry of instructions emanating from the SS-police leadership in the area and during that particular time period, that Jahnhorst and Hertel would be summoned to drive from their posts in Luboml and Maciejow respectively to Kovel for a meeting which appears to have immediately preceded massacres in both those locations under their leadership without some discussion of orders or instructions regarding the killing of Jews.

Luboml

On 22 July 1941 the part of the 1st Company under the command of 1st Lieutenant Jahnhorst shot 217 Jewish men in Luboml. According to Jahnhorst’s trial statement in 1973, an SD man of higher rank arrived in Luboml and requested that Jahnhorst put his men at the disposal of the SD for an execution of the town’s Jews. Jahnhorst claimed that he resisted the order, but was threatened by the SD man with a court martial for insubordination during war. Jahnhorst then drove to battalion headquarters in Kovel to meet with Dressler who apparently told him that he must obey the order of the SD man and carry out the execution. Jahnhorst claimed that he requested a transfer to a fighting unit then left Kovel for Luboml where he would find that the massacre had been carried out in his

⁶⁵ Pohl, ‘Ukraine’, p.28.

⁶⁶ Jacob Biber, *Survivors. A Personal Story of the Holocaust* (San Bernardino, Cal: The Borgo Press, 1989), p.43. Kruglov and Dean, ‘Mielnica’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, p.1423. Spector, *Volhynia*, p.73. The timing of these massacres will be discussed in more detail below.

absence.⁶⁷ One former company member stated that he witnessed an exchange of words between Jahnhorst and two SD men because Jahnhorst did not agree with the order, but no further evidence emerged that confirmed the rest of Jahnhorst's story.⁶⁸ Instead, witnesses, including the former platoon leader Grünwald, confirmed that not only was Jahnhorst present at the execution, but that he organised the action and gave the order to his men.⁶⁹ According to the findings of the post-war investigations, on the day before the execution Jahnhorst gathered his men and gave them the order to remove the Jews of the town from their homes and that they were to be brought to a warehouse where they would remain under guard. Following this they were to be shot. The policemen were told by Jahnhorst to tell the Jews that they were being collected to be put to work. One former company member recalled the company sergeant, Arneitz, announcing to the gathered policemen that if they had to shoot partisans, "this means they would have to shoot Jews". This statement was not confirmed by the other witnesses some of whom only recalled Jahnhorst making an announcement regarding the execution. It is possible, however, that Jahnhorst made a similar announcement or comment himself, before or after the execution. The Jews of the town were rounded up by the 2nd and 3rd Platoons under Grünwald and Radinger, the platoon leaders, and were guarded overnight.⁷⁰ A number of survivor witnesses recalled the policemen arriving with big trucks and rounding up between 200 and 400 men from their homes with the help of Ukrainian militia.⁷¹ On the following day a selection was made. The men were put into two columns, those in one column were loaded into the trucks and taken to the Jewish cemetery where they were shot.⁷² The others that were released presumably were deemed by the Germans to be able to perform necessary jobs. According to one survivor, the relatives of the men taken were told to produce gold coins, vodka, boots and other goods in exchange for their men's lives. Some relatives were to find out later that the Germans had set up a table with the vodka and other goods in the cemetery and were celebrating after the shooting.⁷³ Before being shot the men were forced to write letters to their families stating that they were being sent to Germany for work and the notes were brought to the families. The families of the victims were told what had happened by the Ukrainians that were present at the cemetery.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, pp.1846-7.

⁶⁸ *JuNS*, Vol XLV, P.316, statement by Probst.

⁶⁹ ZStL B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1645 B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, pp.1855-6.

⁷⁰ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, pp.2015-28.

⁷¹ USCSF, Orbuch, Posner and Sobel. ZStL B162/6649, statements by Szymon Korret, p.237, Moshe Lipszye, p.244 and Leo Duniec, 1962, p.249.

⁷² ZStL B162/6649, pre-trial investigations 'Final Report', pp.220-1.

⁷³ USCSF, Sobel.

⁷⁴ USCSF, Orbuch. ZStL B162/6649, statement by Lipszye, 1962, p.244.

During the trial the prosecutors were unable to establish whether Jahnhorst gave the order to fire and Jahnhorst himself denied all complicity. Several witnesses stated that he was present at the shooting site.⁷⁵ Jahnhorst claimed that he did not agree with the murders and that he was trying to get away from the battalion as quickly as possible “because the things I saw there were depressing”.⁷⁶ The opinions given during the trials of Jahnhorst by his former subordinates were generally positive and two witnesses claimed that they thought Jahnhorst was against the shooting of Jews.⁷⁷ Jahnhorst claimed that he had demanded a transfer to a “fighting unit”, which he got and was transferred to an SS-police division in Holland on 6 October 1941. However, Jahnhorst’s career did not suffer following his transfer as he was shortly afterwards promoted to battalion commander in the Waffen-SS.⁷⁸ It does appear that while in Luboml Jahnhorst was suffering with a particular illness for which he received constant treatment from the battalion doctor and was later sent to recover in a military hospital.⁷⁹ We know of cases in which unit leaders suffered functional problems of a psychosomatic nature as a result of their involvement in the massacres. Such problems were easy for SS doctors to recognise and they tended to prescribe the sufferers a course of leave.⁸⁰ In *Ordinary Men*, Browning discusses the case of a Captain Hoffmann, like Jahnhorst an SS-man and company commander in Battalion 101. Hoffmann started suffering from diarrhoea and stomach cramps following his company’s first “action” in 1942, symptoms that would apparently reoccur with each following action. Even though he tried to hide his illness and continued to give orders for massacres from his sickbed, Hoffmann was eventually transferred to a police battalion fighting on the Eastern Front and did not suffer any consequences as far as his career was concerned. Browning concludes that Hoffmann displayed symptoms of a psychologically induced illness, caused by or aggravated by his company’s activities.⁸¹ Walter Blume, the initial commander of SK 4a, was, in the view of his men, obviously deeply uneasy about the actions carried out by his unit. Even though Blume was in agreement with the “necessity” of the actions and actually took part, he ultimately couldn’t cope and had himself transferred.⁸² According to one former policeman, at Luboml Jahnhorst turned away during the execution and left.⁸³ The same witness stated that he got the impression that Jahnhorst was against the shooting; an argument that Jahnhorst tried to make during the post-war trial. However, as was the case with Hoffmann and Blume, it may well have

⁷⁵ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, p.1853 and ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, pp.2017-22.

⁷⁶ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, pp.1840-1.

⁷⁷ *JuNS*, Vol XLV, pp.312-3.

⁷⁸ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, p.1848.

⁷⁹ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, p.1854.

⁸⁰ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.207.

⁸¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp.114-20.

⁸² Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.188.

⁸³ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Jahnhorst, 1973, p.1841.

been the case that rather than disagreeing with the murder of Jewish civilians, Jahnhorst was unable to cope physically or emotionally; as he stated himself, the things he saw made him depressed. Like Hoffmann, Jahnhorst had himself transferred to a “fighting unit” with no negative repercussions for his career; rather he received a promotion shortly after his transfer.

Similarly, there were no career repercussions following his supposed resistance to the orders of the SD leader. Jahnhorst claimed that the SD man threatened him with his life if he disobeyed the orders, a common defence given by many defendants during post-war trials, which following extensive research into the actions and motives of the “direct” perpetrators we know is not very likely at all to have been the case.⁸⁴ During the post-war trials, Jahnhorst was found to have lied about being commander of the 1st Company, about his presence at the first massacre in Luboml, about not attending the officers’ meeting in Kovel (if Hertel is to be believed on this count), about being threatened by an SD leader and about the reasons behind his transfer. Instead, whether or not he found the actual murders difficult to cope with, Jahnhorst appears to have played a lead role in the massacre at Luboml. He prepared the men for the task, gave the order to his gathered policemen, organised the killing process and was present, at least for a while, at the killing site.

Maciejow

In Maciejow the other half of the 1st Company under the leadership of Hertel also carried out a massacre of Jewish men during what appears to have been around the same time as the massacre in Luboml. Survivor Jacob Biber has stated that the round-up of victims killed in the first large massacre in Maciejow occurred on 18 July 1941, four days before the massacre in Luboml. Hertel’s post-war version of events in Maciejow bears a striking similarity to Jahnhorst’s version of Luboml. Hertel claimed that an “SD commando” of three or four men arrived in Maciejow shortly following the officers’ meeting in Kovel. The SD leader demanded that Hertel put his men at the disposal of the SD for an execution of Jewish civilians and showed Hertel a written order from Jeckeln for the task.⁸⁵ Like Jahnhorst, Hertel claimed that he resisted the order and tried to make contact with the battalion headquarters in Kovel by radio and by telephone at the town railway station, neither of which worked. He also claimed that he was threatened with an SS-police court and a possible death sentence. During the post-war investigations of former members of Battalion 314 in the 1960s and 1970s, Hertel changed his story considerably and appears to have been attempting to replicate

⁸⁴ On the myth of being forced to obey orders, Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess (eds.), *“The Good Old Days”. The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (New York: Konecky and Konecky, 1991), pp.76-86.

⁸⁵ ZStL 162/6697, pp.2856-7. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.88-9.

Jahnhorst's account.⁸⁶ From the witness statements, there does appear to have been an "SD" presence at the execution in Maciejow, but it seems unlikely that the SD leader would be brandishing a written order from Jeckeln as claimed by Hertel and, as with Jahnhorst, less likely that Hertel would be threatened in such a way.⁸⁷ Regardless, Hertel continued to organise his policemen to collect the Jews from their homes, guard the area to prevent outside interference or escape attempts and to form a shooting squad.⁸⁸

Hertel ordered that all Jewish men were to be arrested and brought to the courtyard of the company headquarters which appears to have been an old monastery. This was done with the help of the Ukrainian mayor and militia and, as with Luboml, the arrested Jews were to be told that they were being brought for work. According to Biber and the memoir of Leon Ginsburg, an order was given that all Jewish men between the ages of 16 and 60 were to gather in the centre of town at 8am with their passports. The Germans sent a few of the older men home then forced the rest to march to the police headquarters in the old monastery, here a selection took place while the men were beaten with sticks and attacked by the policemen's dogs. As in Luboml, two groups were formed; one group of men who possessed certain craft skills were told to run home, the others were to be shot behind a monastery building.⁸⁹ Hertel carried out a selection by questioning the captives and checking their documents while he sat behind a desk. Those who were selected to be shot were taken to a separate room where they were guarded overnight. He had also organised the digging of a pit to be used for the execution by a group of Jews who would also be shot at the end of the execution.⁹⁰ On the day of the execution, the Jews who had been selected to be shot were taken in groups of six to the pit, directly behind the farm house that served as the company barracks where they were shot standing in front of the pit in the back of the neck by a squad of six shooters. The shooting squad was changed throughout the execution, but it is not clear how many policemen acted as shooters. The post-war trial investigators concluded that there were probably about 200 victims.⁹¹ According to Biber, 400 men had been collected in the town, 75 returned and 325 were killed.⁹² It remains unclear exactly where Hertel was during the execution and what he was doing, but it is clear that he

⁸⁶ *JuNS*, Vol XLV, pp.302-11.

⁸⁷ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.165. Jeckeln's method appears to have been to issue verbal orders directly to the regiment or battalion leaders regarding executions of civilians to avoid leaving a paper-trail.

⁸⁸ ZStL B162/6697, p.2857.

⁸⁹ Biber, *Survivors*, pp.43-5. Suzanne Ginsburg, *Noike. A Memoir of Leon Ginsburg* (Avenger Books, 2012), pp.22-3.

⁹⁰ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Küster, 1947, pp.1239-1243. B162/6693, statement by Hertel, 1973, pp.1828 and B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.2857-63.

⁹¹ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.2857-63. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.89-91.

⁹² Biber, *Survivors*, p.49.

played the key role in the organisation of the policemen under his command in order to organise and carry out the massacre. As was to be the practice in Luboml, the victims were made to write to their families saying that they were to be working in a labour camp.⁹³

The massacres in Maciejow and Luboml were so similar in procedure that it seems clear that the details must have been discussed at the officer's meeting which appears then, if Biber's dating is accurate, to have occurred between 14 and 17 July 1941. Hertel and Jahnhorst would not have been surprised, as they claimed, by the arrival and orders of the "SD unit". Longerich highlights Battalion 314 as an example of a police battalion shooting women and children as early as July 1941; that is before the other SS-police units under Jeckeln's command in Ukraine.⁹⁴ This contention is no doubt taken from the findings of the post-war trial proceedings that part of the 1st Company under the command of Hertel carried out a massacre of men, women and children in Maciejow.⁹⁵ However, it is clear from the accounts of several survivors from Maciejow and Luboml that in July 1941, Battalion 314 were in fact killing only Jewish men at this time. The trial proceedings appear to have mixed up the details of the first massacres in mid-July with those of massacres that were carried out in Maciejow and Luboml in August 1941 and later in Ukraine in which the battalion were also targeting Jewish women and children.

The 2nd Company in the Holoby area.

The 2nd Company arrived in Holoby, a small town 26 km south-east of Kovel, around 14 July 1941. The two officers were the Company Commander Wendorff and his second in command and leader of the 1st Platoon Bauer. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons were led by older NCOs, Tachezi and Walter. The primary tasks of the 2nd Company were to guard the main train line that ran through Holoby and to "secure" and "pacify" the area. During July and August 1941 there appears to have been a number of killing actions, some of which were brought to light through Bauer's own testimony. The trial proceedings were able to identify three events that involved the killing of Jewish civilians led by Bauer, but it remains unclear exactly when, where and in which order these events occurred.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ginsburg, *Noike*, p.23.

⁹⁴ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.226. In *Himmler*, Longerich states that the 1st SS Brigade began shooting women at the end of July and children during early August; SK 4a began shooting women and children from the beginning of August and EK 5 not until mid-September 1941, pp.844-5. Pohl states that Battalion 314 conducted its first massacre in Matsiiv (Maciejow) on 22 July 1941, 'Ukraine', p.28. It seems likely that the massacre referred to in the 1st Company diary on 22 July was in fact in Luboml where the diarist was likely to have been stationed. The same diary mentions Maciejow on 23 July 1941, but the entry contains no further details. It may be so that Biber is mistaken and that the first massacre in Maciejow was carried out the day after the massacre in Luboml, ZStL B162/6651, Tagebuch Balek, p.587.

⁹⁵ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, p.2012.

⁹⁶ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, pp.2012-16.

At some point after the arrival of the company in Holoby, the three platoon leaders are supposed to have received orders from Wendorff regarding a “clearing action” of the area, which included the task of segregating the Jews of the area from the rest of the population. The vague nature of this order could not be clarified by the trial proceedings. However, in order to “segregate” the Jews Wendorff, explaining the plan over a map, is alleged to have ordered his leaders to make contact with the local militia and mayors of the villages so that the Jews could be identified. The evening before they were to set off, the policemen were gathered to receive their orders and a sergeant called for volunteers for “an unspecified action” to be explained the next day.⁹⁷ Bauer later claimed that he did not know if he had received a command or a “strong suggestion” by a higher officer, but that he was to select and arrest male Jews who were of an age to reproduce or carry weapons; a directive that appears similar to the orders issued to PRC on 11 July. Bauer also claimed that he received an order from Wendorff, probably at the briefing, that the arrested Jews were to be shot. Wendorff for his part denied this and suggested that Bauer could have been acting on his own initiative.⁹⁸ Bauer, as confirmed by his own testimony, was afforded a significant level of initiative in carrying out his orders as he was left with a choice; the decision was his whether to transport the arrested Jews back to the company headquarters in Holoby, where they would probably be transported back to the battalion headquarters in Kovel, or to shoot them on the spot.⁹⁹ For the first massacre examined here by Bauer’s unit, which appears to have immediately followed Wendorff’s instructions, Bauer opted to carry out the killings on the spot rather than transport the victims back. Bauer later claimed that he made this decision because he felt that the terrain in the area in which the village lay had become impassable as they were still partly mined from the time of the fighting and that there was a threat of partisan activity in the area, “That is why we could not move freely...I had to be careful”.¹⁰⁰ The post-war prosecutors were not convinced by this explanation and concluded that a return transport would have been possible, but Bauer decided not to take this option. Bauer’s decision may have been motivated by reasons other than expediency. A former 2nd Company member recalled the company sergeant moaning about the fact that the 2nd Company had “got” too few Jews compared to the other two companies.¹⁰¹ It cannot be excluded that the sergeant may have been reflecting Bauer’s opinion of the situation. The way in which units of Battalion 314 had been separated in the Kovel area left the junior officers in command positions, including, at least for operations outside of Holoby itself, Bauer. Within the atmosphere of

⁹⁷ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.146-8.

⁹⁸ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2932.

⁹⁹ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.156.

¹⁰⁰ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.156.

¹⁰¹ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2912.

permissible violence and the orders targeting Jews for execution, Bauer may have been measuring his performance, and therefore career prospects, against the performance of his contemporaries in this regard.

The day after the gathering of the company for volunteers, Bauer set off with two trucks, one empty, and a group of 30 volunteers to a village located some distance from Holoby.¹⁰² It is possible that this village was Mielnica, a village that is about 30 km east of Kovel in the Holoby area. In 1941 there were approximately 1,000 Jewish inhabitants in Mielnica and it is known that a massacre of approximately 280 Jewish men took place there sometime in mid-July 1941. This massacre appears likely to have been carried out by the 2nd Company of Battalion 314, and may well have been the first massacre in the Holoby area carried out under Bauer's command around the same time as the massacres in Maciejow and Luboml.¹⁰³

According to witness statements from former policemen that were part of this unit, as they were approaching the village Bauer suddenly saw a Jewish civilian, identified with an armband, on the railway track walking towards the village. Bauer is reported to have said, "There is one already", ordered the trucks to stop and got out and beat the man with his whip. The man was then hauled up onto a truck and driven to the village.¹⁰⁴ One of the former policemen who recalled this act by Bauer supplemented his account with references to Bauer as a "Jew-hater".¹⁰⁵ In this instance Bauer may have been acting according to a virulent antisemitism as indicated by the witness testimony, an eagerness for violence, a demonstration of his power as an officer, or indeed a combination of these factors. However, the effect of this act, whether intentional or not, would have been demonstrative.¹⁰⁶ Bauer's comment of "There is one already", suggests that the men under his command would already have had at least a strong indication of what their upcoming tasks would be. Physically attacking and assaulting a man purely because he could be recognised as a Jew clearly demonstrates precisely who, even if it was not already clear to the policemen, their upcoming targets would be. In addition, Bauer was demonstrating that he would be leading the violence from the front and was more than willing to carry out any act that he was to order, or had ordered, himself. During post-war testimony Bauer responded to a question of why he did not try to avoid carrying out carrying out the order he claimed he had received from Wendorff. Bauer answered that

¹⁰² StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.148.

¹⁰³ Kruglov and Dean, 'Mielnica', p.1423.

¹⁰⁴ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.148.

¹⁰⁵ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report (statement of Arnold), 1974, p.2046. Wittmann, the driver, described Bauer as a "complete idiot".

¹⁰⁶ In *Believe and Destroy*, Ingrao uses the term "demonstrative violence" when describing the hanging of two men in Zhitomir for a stated crime by members of Einsatzgruppe C as a legitimising prelude to the execution of 402 Jews, p.175.

he had contemplated feigning illness rather than leading the shooting “on the spot”, but because he was the only officer present he had to motivate his men to carry out the order.¹⁰⁷ That Bauer actually contemplated feigning illness after leaving Holoby seems very doubtful, but his explanation regarding his perception of his role as leader and motivator appears more credible.

According to Bauer, on arrival in the village, he sought out the mayor and instructed him to provide guides in order to locate the homes of the Jews. He then divided his men into smaller teams that would carry out the search and collection of the victims, those who would transport the victims to the execution site and the shooting squad; like Jahnhorst and Hertel, Bauer instructed his men to tell the victims that they were being brought for work. While the collection of the male Jews was being carried out, Bauer left for the pit that was being dug by some of the local population, located about 100-300m outside of the village, with the shooting squad by truck.¹⁰⁸ Before the shooting began, Bauer instructed his men how the killing would be done and informed them that he would be present at the shooting site. In his post-war statement on the shootings in general, Bauer said that if on occasion there were enough shooters available, he would have two shooting squads operating at the same time, but sometimes in different places. If this was the case, Bauer said that he would still have to lead the killing process by being present at both sites. On this occasion in the unknown village near Holoby, Bauer organised a process in which twelve Jews at a time were forced to lie face down in the pit and the shooters were to stand with one foot on the buttocks of the victim. Bauer and platoon leader Tachezi would also act as shooters. After the first row of victims had been shot the next two groups of twelve people would be forced to lie down on top of them, the remaining victims were shot while standing facing the pit. The victims that had not fallen into the pit after being shot would have to be dragged into the pit by the Ukrainians who had dug it. According to the findings of the post-war prosecutors, at least 100 (if this was Mielnica it was more like 280 victims) Jewish men were killed in this way, including the man that Bauer had beaten on the railway line; after each shot the shooters were given schnapps. Bauer recalled that any victims during shootings under his command that had tried to escape and were wounded, would be brought back to the pit and killed in the ordered way.¹⁰⁹

When asked in 1973 whether it was always the same men that always acted as shooters Bauer replied that he didn’t always pick the same people: “I had known my people long enough to know who I could trust [with certain tasks] and could assign them accordingly. Of course, according to my

¹⁰⁷ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Bauer, 1973, p.1813.

¹⁰⁸ StA 320 Js, File 1, summary of statements of former members of Police Battalion 314, p.50. File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.148-59.

¹⁰⁹ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.149-58.

observations, there were one or another of the men who didn't seem to be in the frame of mind to participate [in the shootings]". However, it appears that those who requested not to take part in the shooting squad still took part in the overall killing process: "In these cases they were given guarding or security duties". Bauer indicated that there were some individuals who were regular volunteers, but that none of his men were forced to participate as a shooter; although each squad leader was expected to take part in this way.¹¹⁰

Bauer may not have been the author of the task and may have indeed been acting within the parameters of specific orders or perhaps guidelines, but clearly took ownership of the action as far as organisation and perpetration were concerned. His post-war expressions of feeling a responsibility to carry out his duty as an order receiver and order giver as the only officer at the scene may have been true to an extent, but may also have been intended to obscure the presence of more "base" motives such as a virulent antisemitism or lust for violence which, judging by witness statements regarding his actions and character, appear likely. Certainly, expressions of these motives during the trial procedure would have carried a far stronger penalty than the one Bauer eventually received.¹¹¹ However, regardless of his motives, his leadership role as the commanding officer on the spot is clear. The trial proceedings also brought to light a number of other actions in which Bauer played the lead role, all of which occurred sometime in July or August 1941. These isolated actions carried out under Bauer's command demonstrate the significant level of autonomy junior officers could enjoy in the field.

Generally it appears that partisan activity in the Kovel area was at this time in the summer of 1941 not very high, but there was some activity in the Holoby area designated to the 2nd Company. One former policeman recalled that one of the bridges in the area had been blown up and one of the policemen was shot.¹¹² Another former policeman recalled a time, which may be related to the blowing up of the bridge and the shooting of the policeman, when part of the 2nd Company, probably led by Bauer, had been on the road for two or three days combatting a partisan group in cooperation with "another unit". According to the witness, the unit had succeeded in capturing four or five partisans who, after a "brief interrogation", were shot. Furthermore, on the same expedition a "Russian" commissar was captured in a small village, taken to a house and beaten to death under the leadership of Bauer.¹¹³ In what appears to have been a connected incident, another "Russian"

¹¹⁰ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Bauer, 1973, pp.1808-9.

¹¹¹ Bauer received only 5½ years in prison. *JuNS*, Vol XLV.

¹¹² ZStL B162/6695, statement by Fährmeister, 1974, p.2210.

¹¹³ StA 320 Js, File 1, report of pre-trial investigations, pp.132-6. The witness, Rade, described Bauer wearing gloves during the beating indicating that Bauer performed at least some of the beating himself. Bauer denied the story and three years after his original testimony Rade suddenly appeared less sure about some of the

was shot under Bauer's leadership along with two Jewish male civilians. The "Russian" and two Jewish men were arrested in a small village in the Holoby area and taken to a wooded area outside of the village. Bauer apparently spoke to the Russian who took a piece of paper out of his pocket and handed it to Bauer prompting Bauer to beat him with his riding crop. The Jews were made to dig a pit and the Russian was shot while, according to the post-war witness statements, trying to run away. The two Jews had to collect the body and place it in the pit and were then shot in the pit by Tachezi with a machine pistol and his foot on the buttocks of the victim as was the method applied during the first massacre. Tachezi then announced to those present that the Jewish men were shot because they were giving the Russian accommodation, so were "complicit" in his crimes. Bauer led the entire action.¹¹⁴ It is not entirely clear why the "Russian" was killed, whether it was because he was viewed to have been a partisan, Red Army straggler or a Soviet official. But because this event appears to be related to the bombing of the bridge and the shooting of the policeman it seems likely that he was executed in connection with these acts. It is possible that the two Jewish men were in fact giving accommodation to the Russian as in Tachezi's announcement, but it is also possible that the Jews were arrested purely in order to dig the pit and murdered anyway as witnesses. For executions the killers would not normally dig the pits themselves or bury the bodies of the victims but would have the local population perform these tasks instead. As Ingrao has pointed out, the German gunmen and guards found the idea of handling corpses repellent as it increased the contact between killers and victims.¹¹⁵ According to Lower, when the Germans arrested partisans, or those suspected of being partisans in Ukraine, if the suspect was Jewish he or she would usually be shot on the spot, but if they were part of the nationalist or Soviet underground they would be interrogated before being killed.¹¹⁶ The fact that Bauer decided in this case to carry out the execution on the spot rather than transporting the man back to headquarters was probably not unusual for a leader of a unit in those types of situations.

The linking of partisan or enemy activity behind the front lines with Jews may have served as a rationale for a further massacre that occurred under Bauer's leadership which appears to have been carried out as a form of reprisal. Sometime in July or August the 1st Platoon of the 2nd Company under the leadership of Bauer arrived at a village that could not be identified during the trials. The organisation and preparation of this action by Bauer followed the same pattern as the massacre

facts and his own role in the incident. The court ruled that Bauer could not be prosecuted on the basis of Rade's testimony.

¹¹⁴ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.186-9.

¹¹⁵ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, pp.180-1. See also Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets. A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.75.

¹¹⁶ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.184.

described above and the victims appear to have been Jewish men. On this occasion however, the method of shooting differed significantly. The victims were made to stand on the edge of the pit facing away from the shooters in groups of four. Bauer organised two shooters for each victim that stood 15-25m behind and were instructed to aim for the upper body of the victims on the firing command given by him. Bauer assigned one of his men to “finish off” those who were not killed by the first volley. According to a witness, who also participated as a shooter, Bauer and Tachezi also shot those who were not yet killed. The trials were unable to determine how many Jewish men were murdered on this occasion, but concluded that it was at least twelve.¹¹⁷ The witness that participated as a shooter claimed that he did not volunteer for the job and did not know in advance that the execution was to be of Jews. However, he also wanted to make it clear that “in that area there had been parachutists”.¹¹⁸ This statement was clearly designed to avoid being accused of knowingly volunteering for an execution of Jews, but may also reveal the rationale that was employed at this time for the massacre of Jewish civilians by units of Battalion 314 in the Kovel area. The claims made by the accused and witnesses during the trials that there was some enemy or partisan activity does not appear to have been fictitious.

British Intelligence intercepted a message from Jeckeln to Himmler and Daluge, among others, dated 24 August 1941:

In following up the remnants of the 9th Partisan Battalion, the Regiment had come under enemy machine-gun fire about midnight. Exchange of light signals between bandits and aircraft observed...[PRS] after a heavy engagement with partisan troops (7 man strong) who had destroyed the telephone lines had cleared up the situation...Small parties had shot 12 bandits and franc-tireurs and 70 Jews.¹¹⁹

Jeckeln does not single out Battalion 314 in this message, but it does appear to match up with some of the witness statements about the spate of actions by the unit led by Bauer, which, according to one statement, was involved in “anti-partisan activity” along with another unit, that quite feasibly may also have been part of PRS. Another intercepted message, this time from PRS to Daluge, reported the funeral of a Captain Richter (Reserve) carried out by Battalion 314 on 30 August 1941.¹²⁰ It is not clear whether this is the same man that some former battalion members claimed had been shot in connection with the actions described above. It does not appear that there was a Captain Richter in any of the battalion’s companies at that time, but he may have been one of the staff or another policeman stationed in the Kovel area.

¹¹⁷ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.177-8. ZStL B162/6695, statement by Arnold, 1974, p.2244.

¹¹⁸ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Arnold, 1975, p.2244.

¹¹⁹ NA HW 1/35.

¹²⁰ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report, 2.9.41.

Lower has shown that the Germans in Ukraine used disproportionate reprisal measures in response to the few attacks by partisans or enemy troops on the German forces during this early stage in the occupation, which essentially served as a cover for carrying out the mass murder of Jews at a time when relatively little resistance actually existed.¹²¹ The way the second execution perpetrated by Bauer's unit was carried out, in addition to the connections made in the witness statements of this massacre with partisan activity, suggests that this may have been a reprisal action. On this occasion the victims were shot from a longer distance and the shooters were instructed to aim for the upper body, which is quite a difference in method compared with the first massacre carried out by Bauer's unit where the victims were shot at very close range. The second massacre appears to have been staged like a court-martial and may well have been justified on the spot as a military necessity in the same way that Tachezi's announcement was designed to justify the shooting of the two Jewish men that had dug the pit. If this action was indeed carried out during the anti-partisan excursion under Bauer's leadership, it seems possible that this was an action carried out on Bauer's initiative.

Following his police interrogations in 1973 and 1974, the West German prosecutors found Bauer to be extremely well orientated about details and circumstances that might have remained unknown and concluded that he seemed willing to confess to his actions and appeared to want to relieve his conscience. The situation appeared to change dramatically during his main trial where he altered his account significantly and attempted to deflect responsibility for his actions. In the main trial Bauer, possibly imitating Jahnhorst and Hertel, claimed that there were two SD men present at the first massacre; something he had not claimed in his earlier statements and which was not confirmed by other witnesses.¹²² Despite Bauer's earlier relative openness, the trial proceedings were not able to determine more precisely when and where each of the actions under Bauer's command occurred. It does appear that the first massacre described above preceded the other actions, but it is not clear by how long.

What does emerge relatively clearly is Bauer's prominent role in these actions in which he appears to have exercised a considerable measure of initiative. Bauer claimed that after returning to headquarters in Holoby, he submitted a report to Wendorff which, according to Bauer would have read along the lines of: "Operation carried out, so many stragglers apprehended and delivered, so many Jews shot or brought to company".¹²³ Despite Bauer's own testimony that he was given the choice by Wendorff either to carry out the shootings on the spot or to transport the Jews back to company or battalion headquarters, Bauer appears to have often chosen the former option and

¹²¹ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, pp.57 and 183.

¹²² ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2914. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.155.

¹²³ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2924.

carried out the interrogations, executions and massacres under his own command. According to Bauer himself, the “shootings of Jews would have been contrary to [Wendorff’s] very nature” and following the first massacre he accepted Bauer’s report “without comment”.¹²⁴ This opinion of Wendorff appears to have been shared by his former company men, one of whom stated clearly that he had “never seen Wendorff at a shooting”, although he had seen Bauer.¹²⁵

The final massacres in Kovel by Battalion 314

A flurry of executions were carried out by sub-units of Battalion 314 in the Kovel area during the last few days prior to their relocation to Vinnitsa on 1 September 1941. Jeckeln reported a number of shootings that had been carried out by Battalion 314: the shooting of 25 Jews on 18 August; on 21 August the shooting of 28 Ukrainians and on 23, 24 and 26 August the battalion shot 367, 294 and 69 Jews in the Kovel area. According to a diary kept by a member of the 1st Company, between 21 and 28 August the company shot 53, 69, 64 and 30 Jews.¹²⁶ The figures given in Jeckeln’s report may represent the total numbers of executions reported by the battalion as a whole so may include the figures shown in the 1st Company diary. It is not clear how many massacres the battalion actually carried out during this period, but it is clear that there was a high level of activity in the last two weeks before the battalion left the area. In contrast to the earlier massacres carried out by Battalion 314 in July, the victims of these later massacres in August 1941 appear to have been mostly Jewish women.

Survivor Bertha Reis described how she had been given a work permit and was employed by “the Schupo” in Kovel over the summer of 1941; so she is likely to have been employed by a member of the 3rd Company or battalion staff.¹²⁷ During the last couple of days of August, it appears that at least some of the policemen had been informed of a plan for a massacre to be carried out by the company in Kovel. The policeman that Reis worked for told her that “if she had a man, she should tell him that on Saturday he should come for work”. In the early afternoon of [Saturday] the policeman she worked for said that he needed his laundry because they [3rd Company and battalion staff] were leaving the next day. Reis found out later that that same afternoon Jews had been forcibly removed from their homes and were rumoured to have been shot. The “old mother” from next door had been taken, but not her two sons.¹²⁸ On 31 August the 3rd Company shot 88 Jews in Kovel.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2925.

¹²⁵ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Arnold, 1974, p.2224.

¹²⁶ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report, August 1941. ZStL B162/6651, Tagebuch Balek for 1941, p.587. B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1644.

¹²⁷ USCSF, Reis.

¹²⁸ USCSF, Reis.

¹²⁹ Kruglov and Schalkowsky, ‘Kowel’, p.1389. 31 August 1941 was a Sunday.

There was a second massacre in Luboml carried out by Jahnhorst's units of the 1st Company on 21 August.¹³⁰ On this occasion an estimated 400 Jews, mostly women, were rounded-up and murdered either on the same day as the round-up or the next. The Jewish Council tried to bribe the Germans but only a few were released.¹³¹ The second massacre in Maciejow was carried out around the same time as the second massacre in Luboml where about 300 women were killed at the same place as the first massacre.¹³² For the second execution there appears to have been a change made to the method of execution in that instead of using rifles, machine-guns were used. According to one former policeman, a fellow policeman told him that the change had been made because the former process had become "too drawn-out".¹³³ It remains unclear whether there was an SD presence at the second massacre, but as the unit commander, Hertel must have initiated or at least agreed to this change in method. Hertel had formed a Jewish council, but ordered them to be shot for not providing the demanded amount of foodstuffs, which, according to one former company member, was carried out as the unit was preparing to leave Maciejow.¹³⁴ It appears that many of Maciejow's Jews had hidden or fled to the surrounding countryside before the round-up for the second massacre. The Germans offered rewards for every Jew discovered and the Ukrainian militia, which according to Biber helped the Germans in every action anyway, tried to hunt down those that had fled; it appears that the killings continued until Hertel and his units left town.¹³⁵ The new commandant of the civilian administration that replaced the military administration following the 1st Company's departure from Maciejow, stopped the killings and other harassments of the town's remaining Jewish population by the militia.¹³⁶

The temporary cessation of the killings under the new administration seems likely to have been more to do with the fact that by September 1941, Hertel and his men had murdered more or less all Jewish adults aside from those considered to be "essential" workers rather than any personal convictions on the part of the new commandant. The creation of these conditions appear to have been the reason for the flurry of executions carried out by Battalion 314 in late-August 1941 in the Kovel area before the establishment of civil administrations. It would appear then that sometime in August, before 21 August, the units of Battalion 314 received orders to kill all "non-essential" Jewish

¹³⁰ Kruglov, 'Luboml', states that the massacre took place on 21 August, p.1410. Survivors Clara Posner and Nathan Sobel recalled that the second round-up took place one month after the first (22 July 1941), USCSF.

¹³¹ USCSF, Posner and Sobel. Kruglov, 'Luboml', p.1410. ZStL B162/6649, statement by Koret, 1962, pp.237.

¹³² Biber, *Survivors*, p.50. Ginsburg, *Noike*, p.24, states the victims in this massacre were women aged 16-60.

¹³³ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Lettner, 1964, p.53.

¹³⁴ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Küster, 1947, p.1243.

¹³⁵ Biber, *Survivors*, pp.52-5. Ginsburg, *Noike*, p.27.

¹³⁶ Biber, *Survivors*, p.66. Biber recalled that the new commandant was an old soldier who had been stationed in the same area two decades before. According to Biber the Commandant sentenced a German soldier to death for the murder of a Jewish photographer.

workers. From the testimonies of survivors from Kovel, Luboml and Maciejow, it appears that the victims of the massacres in late-August were primarily women who had not been given work permits. The extent to which small children were also victims of these massacres is unclear. In *Noike*, Ginsburg mentions that following the second large massacre in Maciejow there were many small children – orphans – left in the town.¹³⁷ Sobel mentions that there was a “third” round-up in Luboml after which “several” men, women and children were killed, but it is not clear when this action took place. The change in the victims targeted by Battalion 314 may have led to the change in execution methods adopted by Hertel’s men in Maciejow. The use of machine guns in the second massacre may have been an attempt to lessen the burden of murdering the elderly, sick, women and possibly children that may not have been felt by the policemen to the same extent whilst murdering men of “military” age. This method, as described by the former policeman, made the process faster and would have required the participation of fewer “shooters”. Whether this was done on Hertel’s initiative is not clear, but as the commander of the units involved it seems likely that he had at least some input on the issue.

During the post-war trials, some former 1st Company members who were present during massacres either at Luboml or Maciejow claimed to have helped Jewish families escape during the round-ups, moments when they were not being “watched” by higher ranks.¹³⁸ Several more claimed to have requested to be excused shooting duty. A driver claimed that he was told he had to shoot once during the first massacre in Maciejow, but he along with some of the other drivers complained and they were no longer detailed as shooters.¹³⁹ More common were accounts that policemen became sick or told their NCOs that they couldn’t shoot and were given other duties,¹⁴⁰ the drivers with the 1st Company drove the victims to the execution site during the second massacre in Maciejow. Following the first massacre in Maciejow, some policemen complained that they couldn’t eat anymore as they had the stench of blood in their nostrils.¹⁴¹ Bertha Reis’ testimony shows that there was at least one member of Battalion 314 who was prepared to help Jews escape being murdered, but it is significant that this policeman did so out of view. Testimonies given by the former policemen who were involved in the massacres that claim they refused to shoot or helped save Jewish lives cannot be relied upon as during trial proceedings the witnesses would not want to incriminate themselves. It is perhaps easier to accept accounts of perpetrators becoming sick as a result of the tasks. However, none of the witnesses who stated that they requested to be excused shooting duty

¹³⁷ Ginsburg, *Noike*, p.28.

¹³⁸ Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.936

¹³⁹ *JuNS*, Vol XLV, p.315.

¹⁴⁰ *JuNS*, Vol XLV, p.315.

¹⁴¹ Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.942.

stated that they did so because they fundamentally disagreed with the act, they did so because they could not cope. All were given other duties and none claimed to have suffered any repercussions as a result, points that can also be applied to Jahnhorst if there is any truth to his claim that he resisted the order of the SD. These findings confirm Browning's claims in *Ordinary Men*. Jahnhorst and Hertel, however, as the unit leaders on the spot were not in positions in which they could be excused duty or hide or request other tasks had they so wished. Whether they disagreed with the actions or found them physically and emotionally difficult to deal with both performed as the organisers of their unit in carrying out the massacres.

Lieutenant Panis and the 3rd Company in Vinnitsa

One further example of a junior officer of Battalion 314 leading a massacre of Jewish civilians, before the battalion's involvement in the larger-scale massacres of autumn 1941, occurred on 12 September in the Vinnitsa area. This action appears to have been led by Panis who was the new commander of the 1st Platoon. The commander of the 3rd Company was Captain Meisel, but Panis appears to have been the officer leading the shooting. In Panis' SS file is a letter from Meisel giving a character reference on Panis' behalf. In the letter Meisel states that Panis had been an officer in his company from 3 September 1941, just over a week before leading this killing action in Vinnitsa.¹⁴² It is not known for certain if Panis took part in any other killing action prior to 12 September, but this may have been his first experience of such an action.

Panis was accused of leading this particular action where an unknown number of Jewish men and women were murdered. According to a witness who took part in the shooting squad on this occasion, Panis organised the executions so that the victims were made to stand with their backs to the pit, facing the shooting squad who were armed with rifles. Panis is supposed to have given the firing commands and then went to the pit to kill the wounded with a machine-pistol.¹⁴³ Providing the witness statements were correct, Panis would have led this action less than a month after finishing officer training. The method employed by Panis in organising the shooting is notable in that it was carried out in a similar fashion to the second massacre led by Bauer in the Holoby area. This action also appears to have been organised to resemble a more traditional military-style execution or

¹⁴² BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis. The post-war prosecutors were not able to determine precisely when Panis arrived with Battalion 314 which appears to have contributed to Panis not being charged, StA 320 Js, File 1, summary of pre-trial investigations, pp.57-8.

¹⁴³ StA 320 Js, File 1, summary of pre-trial investigations, pp.57-8. The investigation of this case was abandoned because of a lack of evidence. Accounts for this action and Panis' role emerged primarily from the statements of one witness. The testimony of the witness Kalweit, a former member of the 3rd Company, appears to have been reliable enough in that he admitted to being part of the shooting squad and displayed a notably good memory for details in connection with this event.

court-martial. Bauer claimed that he had heard through comrade circles that Captain Meisel “was disposed towards blindfolding the victims of *necessary* [my emphasis] Jewish shootings”. Bauer explained that he found these stories believable as they corresponded exactly to the impression he had of Meisel.¹⁴⁴ It is not clear what Bauer’s impressions of Meisel were, but Bauer claimed that he was influenced by Meisel’s example to use hand signals instead of shouting the firing command in order to ease the suffering of the victims; a claim that was shown to be false by numerous witnesses who clearly remembered him shouting the commands.¹⁴⁵ Meisel was an older, career policeman and may well have used this more “traditional” military-style method of execution in Poland or Ukraine, or indeed both. However, it is revealing that in the 1970s Bauer used the term “necessary” in connection with the murder of Jewish civilians and the use of this method of killing. Bauer may have been invoking a justification used at that time for these early executions as performed as a military or security necessity and the organisation of these acts as a deliberate charade intended to conform to this justification.

As a very young (21 years old) and recently posted officer with probably little or no experience of murdering civilians, Panis may well have taken advice from his more experienced superior, Meisel, on how to carry out the execution or perhaps followed Meisel’s example, although there is no evidence to suggest that Panis used blindfolds. However, it does appear that the experience of officer training contributed considerably to the preparation of Panis in order to organise and personally lead an execution of Jewish civilians.

Roles and influences of the junior officers

One of the ways in which the junior officers of Battalion 314 influenced the mass murders during this period can be seen in the organisation of the killing actions themselves. Of the massacres for which there is information in the Luboml, Maciejow and Holoby areas it appears that to an extent their organisation followed a common procedure. The local mayor and militia were used to identify the homes of the Jews, the commander would organise his men into search and collection groups, groups for guarding the area including the collection point where the victims would be gathered, a group for transporting the victims to the killing site and a firing squad. He would organise the digging of a pit for the execution which would be done by locals or the victims themselves and would carry out a selection of the victims. It also appears that the policemen who were to carry out the tasks were informed ahead of time of the task either by the unit commander or an NCO and the policemen carrying out the search and collection were ordered to inform the victims that they were

¹⁴⁴ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Bauer, 1973, p.1810.

¹⁴⁵ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.159.

being taken for work purposes. That these procedures appear to be fairly uniform among the cases involving the units under the command of Jahnhorst, Hertel and Bauer suggests that there was some discussion at the battalion or company command of how to carry out these actions. However, there were also a number of differences in the way the actions were carried out that suggest a measure of personal influence on the part of the unit commander on the spot.

Although they appear to have been acting according to superior orders or guidelines, the junior officers would have had an influence on the selection of the victims. In the cases of Jahnhorst and Hertel where there is likely to have been an SD commander, the degree of influence on deciding who was to be shot may have been minimal. The SD commander may have had the leading role in deciding the age range, sex and number of the victims as well as determining the “essential workers” who were, for the time being, not to be killed; although Hertel’s role in checking the documents during the selection in Maciejow certainly contributed to this process. Bauer, although acting under directives from Wendorff, as the only officer present would certainly have had a greater role in this regard in organising the massacres in the Holoby area. If the second massacre involving Bauer’s unit was actually perpetrated as part of an anti-partisan operation, Bauer may even have conceived of the action himself in the field. The actual location of the killing site appears to have depended on a number of logistical factors such as the proximity of wooded areas or circumstances like the presence of partisans, factors that may have to have been considered on the spot by the officer in charge.¹⁴⁶ The first massacre in Luboml under Jahnhorst was carried out some distance from the town, whereas the first massacre carried out by Bauer’s unit was done within only a couple of hundred metres and in Maciejow the shooting was done directly behind the unit’s accommodation probably within view and certainly within hearing distance of the rest of the town’s population. In some if not most police battalions and units of the Einsatzgruppen efforts were made by commanding officers to evenly distribute the violent tasks among the men, in particular the actual shooting.¹⁴⁷ According to witness statements under Hertel’s command in Maciejow all members of the unit were expected to shoot once, but in all units men could request not to shoot and were allocated other tasks by the unit or group commander without serious repercussions. The general picture that emerges from the post-war trials confirms the findings of most studies on the German perpetrators in that the policemen could request not to take part as a shooter and be given other tasks. However, the extent to which pressure was put on individuals to shoot at least once at some point remains unclear and is likely to have varied from unit to unit depending on the commander or group leaders. Bauer’s testimony on this seems to be the most reliable in that he admits that all

¹⁴⁶ Desbois, *Holocaust by Bullets*, p.81.

¹⁴⁷ Desbois, *Holocaust by Bullets*, p.55. Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.194.

NCOs under his command were expected to take part as shooters, but from the rest he knew who he could and who he could not rely on. Bauer's statement does not appear to be particularly self-serving in that he is still admitting to playing the primary role in ensuring his unit could carry off the task, a responsibility that was shared by Jahnhorst, Hertel and Panis but which was handled differently in each case. No evidence emerged to suggest that any of the policemen refused to take part in the murder actions in any capacity.

The actual method of shooting employed was also at the discretion of the commanding officer present at the scene. For the first massacres of each sub-unit under Jahnhorst, Hertel and Bauer, the shooting was done at close range. But the methods employed for the second massacres carried out under Hertel's and Bauer's commands differ significantly. For the second massacre in the Maciejow area under Hertel machine-guns were used instead of rifles. The intention here was to speed up the process and further distance the killers from the victims in an attempt to minimise the "spiritual exertions" of the killers themselves.¹⁴⁸ In both the second massacre carried out by Bauer's unit and the massacre in the Vinnitsa area under the leadership of Panis a firing squad method was used. This may have been done in order to correspond with the rationale that the executions were carried out as a military "necessity", in the form of a reprisal or security measure, an ideologically driven murder action crudely disguised as a practical military one.¹⁴⁹ The best, or most suitable methods of organising and preparing killing actions were discussed within the officer ranks, but no precise instructions were given on how the victims were to be shot and it was left to the individual commander to work out the most suitable method for himself and the men under his command.¹⁵⁰ Finally, aside from the practical organisational aspects of the murder actions, the officer in charge at the scene was expected to lead from the front. The trial proceedings on Hertel were not able to determine his actions during the actual shootings (although it is clear that Hertel played a lead role in the intimidation and extortion of the Jewish population of Maciejow). It is clear that Jahnhorst, Bauer and Panis were all present at the actual killing site, but a vanguard role is most apparent in the cases of Panis and especially Bauer. Witnesses stated that Panis and Bauer gave the orders to fire and participated as shooters themselves, including the killing of the wounded victims in the pits. Bauer in particular can be seen leading from the front with extremely violent behaviour. He not only participated in the executions but he also personally led the beating of a man to death and witnesses stated that he whipped both the Jewish man and "Russian" before ordering their executions.

¹⁴⁸ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.177.

¹⁴⁹ Browning, *Origins*, p.259.

¹⁵⁰ This view is also held by Ingrao on the commanders of the Einsatzgruppen units, *Believe and Destroy*, p.181.

Aside from conclusions that may be drawn from the methods employed by the unit leaders in carrying out the murders, very little evidence regarding the legitimisation of the acts and “spiritual care” for the perpetrators, tasks that would have been an important part of the officer’s role, can be found in the trial records. Among the German units that perpetrated the mass murders, it is known that as early as June 1941 the leaders of these units were attempting to legitimise the actions of the killing groups and that speeches were given by officers of all ranks, including Himmler himself, at the murder sites.¹⁵¹ Aside from two comments reported to have been made by a couple of NCOs under the command of Jahnhorst and Bauer connecting partisan activity with the murder of Jewish civilians, there is no evidence of the junior officers giving speeches or making legitimising comments before, during or after the murder actions. The second part of the order issued by the Colonel of PRC on 11 July 1941 stating that the battalion and company commanders were to provide for the “spiritual care” of the men by holding social evenings and Himmler’s insistence on his officers and men participating in ordered “comradeship evenings” suggests that similar orders as those given to PRC would have also been given to the battalions of PRS. It would have been part of the jobs of the junior officers, as well as the company commanders like Wendorff, to perform these duties while the battalion was separated into smaller units in the Kovel area. However, aside from Bauer organising schnapps for the shooters at the first massacre in the Holoby area and the organisation of alcohol in Luboml, there is no evidence for this particular aspect of the officers’ role. This role would have been particularly important during this period in managing the policemen under their command through the transitions to massacres of adult males in July to the massacres of the elderly, sick, women and then children in the autumn.

From the evidence available for the actions of the junior officers of Battalion 314 during this period from mid-July to mid-September 1941, we can trace some elements of the officer training received by these individuals at Berlin-Köpenick being put into practice in Ukraine. Their role as educators is difficult to trace. The training and ideological education of the rank and file to be carried out by the officers was intended to be an ongoing process and there is no reason to assume that this was not done. The training material placed great emphasis on making ideological “knowledge” practically applicable in creating an ideological lens through which events and circumstances were to be viewed. This part of the role of the junior officers would have been carried out during the weekly educational lessons that were supposed to be delivered, during comradeship evenings and also at the sites of the murder actions themselves. The initiative and activism that was supposed to be embodied by the officers is visible to an extent in the preparation, organisation and carrying out of

¹⁵¹ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, pp.152-4.

the killing actions, in particular in the changing of shooting methods by the units led by Hertel and Bauer. It is difficult to trace the actions of Hertel and Jahnhorst as they diffused all responsibility for their actions behind superior orders, so Bauer provides the clearest example of the powers held by a leader of a small mobile unit. Bauer, although operating within what appears to have been general orders given to him by Wendorff, showed a great deal of initiative and activism. He chose to carry out the first execution in the Holoby area himself, even though he had the choice not to do so, and he may have even been the author of the second massacre. Clearly Bauer also had no problems in carrying out interrogations and executions of civilians and suspected partisans himself in the field, demonstrating the culture of activism that the training school was attempting to inculcate in the candidates. Finally, the conception of the officer as a "role model" can be seen in the presence of the junior officers, except in the case of Hertel, throughout the killing process and notably at the killing site itself. Bauer and Panis were also leading by example in doing the killing themselves. The most striking example of this can be seen in Bauer's whipping of the Jewish man before the first massacre. By performing this act, Bauer provided an example to his men of the type of violent behaviour that they would have to perform, short of the actual killing which he was also to demonstrate before the shooting.

Chapter 5. Police Battalion 304 and the Large Scale Massacres of Autumn 1941

During August 1941 there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of Jews killed in Ukraine by the SS and police forces under Jeckeln's command. In contrast to the earlier, relatively smaller scale massacres of June, July and early August discussed in the previous chapter, which targeted overwhelmingly Jewish men of "military" or "reproductive" age, between 27 August and 30 September over 100,000 Jews were killed and the elderly, women and children made up the majority of the victims. However, the precise source of this dramatic shift in killing remains unclear.¹ The massacre of 23,600 Jews, including a large number of women and children, near Kamenets-Podolsk at the end of August 1941 was by far the largest massacre of the war to that point. Jeckeln was present during the massacre carried out by his staff and Police Battalion 320 with the assistance of the local Ukrainian militia and Hungarian soldiers.² Longerich has described the massacre at Kamenets-Podolsk as the "initial spark" that ignited the shift to systematic genocide in the areas under Jeckeln's command.³ From mid-September 1941 there followed a high increase in the numbers of victims murdered including a number of massacres perpetrated by SS and police forces under Jeckeln in the major cities that exceeded 10,000, overwhelmingly Jewish, victims in each case. These large-scale massacres tended to follow approximately the same process. Upon arrival in a city the Sipo and SD would shoot hundreds of Jewish men and the military administration would register the remaining Jewish occupants. Following negotiations between the HSSPF or Einsatzgruppe commander and the army field administration or high command, the majority of the registered Jews would be shot, often with Wehrmacht support.⁴ In contrast to some of the earlier massacres perpetrated on a smaller scale by the same SS and police units in July and August such as those by Battalion 314 as discussed in the previous chapter, there was clearly less scope for initiative below the senior leadership levels as far as the authorship for and carrying out of these larger-scale massacres which involved the planned coordination of a number of different units was concerned. However, for most of the units involved on the ground, the massacres after mid-September represented a shift not only in the sheer numbers of victims, but in the fact that for the first time they were being called on to perpetrate the murder in large numbers of civilians that were not men or women of military or reproductive age; victim groups now included the elderly, infirm and small

¹ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.71. Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.32. Kruglov, 'Losses', p.275. Kruglov estimates that in September 1941 alone, between 136,000 and 137,000 Jews were killed in the western parts of Ukraine.

² Angrick, 'DG IV', p.191. The majority of the victims of this massacre were Jews that had been deported from annexed Hungarian territories. See Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.224. Ingrao describes how at Kamenets-Podolsk Jeckeln flew in on the second morning, watched the shootings by the edge of the pit and demonstrably mocked some prominent victims. In the evening Jeckeln organised a dinner during which the SD men who had acted as shooters were honoured guests. See Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.153.

³ Longerich, *Holocaust*, p.251.

⁴ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.34.

children. This level of coordination of targeted victim groups did not happen immediately following Kamenets-Podolsk or at the same time across the SS and police units.

On 12 August Himmler met with Jeckeln, apparently dissatisfied with the inadequate reports of the 1st SS Brigade, and urged him to act more aggressively.⁵ During the first weeks of August, the Einsatzgruppe C leadership were told that, in principle, Jewish women and children were to be shot as well as some men.⁶ Nevertheless, in the weeks following the meeting, the numbers of Jews killed by Jeckeln's forces jumped dramatically and the scope of the mass murders expanded, at different times and places for different units, to include the elderly, women and children amongst the targeted Jewish victims.⁷ As part of Einsatzgruppe C, SK4a had begun shooting women in large numbers in the Zhytomir area, and soon afterwards also children, whereas the murder of women and children by EK 5 can be documented for the first time in mid-September. The 1st SS Brigade was already murdering women at the end of July and was murdering children by mid-August.⁸ The police battalions under Jeckeln appear to have started murdering women in larger numbers in late-August, but entire communities, including children from mid-September. Reserve Police Battalion 45 went from committing massacres of hundreds of Jewish civilians in late-August to participating in the murder of approximately 12,000 Jewish victims in Berditshev on 15 and 16 September, about 18,000 Jews in Vinnitsa on 19 and 20 September and 33,771 at Babi Jar, with Battalion 303 on 29 and 30 September. Battalion 320, with the 1st SS Brigade, committed its first massacre (in Ukraine) on 20 August in Starokonstantinov murdering 439 men and women and only a week later 23,600 at Kamenets-Podolsk.⁹

As shown in the previous chapter, Battalion 314 committed a number of massacres of Jewish civilians with the numbers of victims totalling under one hundred or in the low-hundreds during July and August and began murdering women as well as men in late-August, but may not have begun murdering children as well until the involvement in its first larger-scale massacre in Dnepropetrovsk

⁵ Browning, *Origins*, pp.311-12. Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.71.

⁶ Alex J. Kay has recently argued that the commander of EK 9 in Russia Centre received orders from Heydrich to include Jewish women and children in the massacres in late-July 1941. The SS units in the central sector appear to have begun shooting women and children somewhat earlier than Jeckeln's units in the southern sector. Alex J. Kay, 'Transition to Genocide, July 1941: Einsatzkommando 9 and the Annihilation of Soviet Jewry', *H&G Studies*, 27, 3 (2013), pp.411-42.

⁷ Browning, *Origins*, p.312. Andrej Angrick, 'Annihilation and Labor: Jews and Thoroughfare IV in Central Ukraine' in Brandon and Lower (eds.), *Shoah*, p.191.

⁸ Longerich, *Holocaust*, pp.223-26. On the 1st SS Brigade, see Martin Cüppers, *Wegbereiter der Shoah. Die Waffen-SS, der Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS und die Judenvernichtung 1939-1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), pp.165-74. Henning Pieper, *Feglein's Horsemen and Genocidal Warfare. The SS Cavalry Brigade in the Soviet Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

⁹ Curilla, *Baltikum*, pp.791-9. As discussed in the previous chapter, it seems unlikely that Battalion 45 were killing Jewish children in already in July 1941. Prior to its involvement in the Babi Jar massacre, Battalion 303 is known to have murdered at least 2,583 victims during 28 massacres.

on 13 and 14 October 1941.¹⁰ The involvement of Battalions 314 and 304 fit the general pattern in Ukraine in the murder of Jewish civilians by SS and police forces. Battalion 314 did not start murdering women as well as men until late-August and was involved in the murder of children after mid-September. Battalion 304, like Battalion 320, entered Ukraine in mid-August and, unlike Battalion 314, started killing men, women and children from early-September 1941. Significantly, Battalions 304 and 320 were Jeckeln's reserve battalions and he decided to deploy these during the period of escalation in mid-August.

The larger-scale massacres that were perpetrated by the SS-police forces from mid-August 1941 appear to have involved greater coordination amongst different agencies in the field and more extensive planning at higher levels of command than the earlier smaller-scale massacres of June, July and August. On the face of it, it would appear that the lower-ranking officers of the police battalions did not enjoy as much room for initiative and were no longer the authors of the massacres or operating in overall command positions as was often the case previously. However, this chapter will show firstly that during the period of the larger-scale massacres in the second half of 1941 the police battalions were still involved in a number of smaller-scale *Aktionen* carried out by sub-units under the command of lower-level officers. Secondly, it will show that although not in overall command positions, the lower-ranking officers still played a pivotal role in the carrying out of the larger-scale massacres. These officers were still in command of their units and had to organise their men, prior to and during the massacres, who were given specific roles to fulfil. Significantly, the part of the role of these officers was to legitimate the actions of their men either before or after the fact. Firstly, this chapter will explore a number of massacres perpetrated by Battalion 304 during autumn 1941. The massacre at Gaisin (Haisyn) will be investigated in somewhat more depth than the other massacres involving Battalion 304 as more attention was spent on this particular case than the others by the post-war trials. This will show how the battalion rotated the tasks of each sub-unit over the period in an attempt to spread responsibility for the massacres broadly across the battalion. It will also show how specific individuals appear to have consistently played lead roles. Secondly, this chapter will examine the large massacre perpetrated by Battalion 314 in Dnepropetrovsk and show the multi-faceted individual roles played by junior officers in carrying out the massacre.

The preparations of Police Battalion 304 and the march through DG IV

While stationed in Warsaw at the end of July or beginning of August, the 4th Company was dissolved and its members divided among the remaining three companies and communications platoon. The 4th platoon of each company (every 2nd platoon was divided into two half platoons) were armed with

¹⁰ Not in Vinnitsa on 19 and 20 September 1941 as stated in Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.796, among others.

light machine guns. At the beginning of August the men and NCOs had been given bicycles and were given instructions on how to use and maintain them; the officers were to travel in motor vehicles, the communications platoon had motorcycles and the administration and kitchen personnel were to travel by truck. According to the diary of a former member, the battalion left Warsaw sometime between 13 and 21 August 1941 and travelled through Lublin and Tarnopol to its first stop in Starokonstantinov.¹¹ The battalion was deployed by Jeckeln at just the stage in mid-August during which there was an escalation in killing by Jeckeln's forces in Ukraine.

It was at this point in time that there were also some important personnel changes within the battalion. The three junior officers, Lochbrunner, Becker and Seeber, had graduated as police lieutenants and SS officers after completing the 19th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick on 11 July 1941 and joined the battalion in Starokonstantinov in late-August 1941.¹² These three SS men, all only 21 years old at the time, replaced NCOs as platoon officers. It was probably at this time that Streubel, another Berlin-Köpenick graduate was promoted from platoon leader to battalion adjutant. This now meant that of the nine platoon leader positions (twelve if the half-platoons are included), three were occupied by junior officers and the rest by the older NCOs. A further addition was in the shape of SS Doctor Busse who joined the battalion from the SS Medical Office on 12 August. Busse, 30 years old in 1941, joined the NSDAP in 1937 and the SS in 1938 and may have been added to the battalion at this time, days before the deployment of the battalion, for a particular kind of expertise in addition to the usual requirements of a staff doctor.¹³ Ingrao has noted that the medical doctors of the Einsatzgruppen units often played a role in the field and sometimes at the killing sites, in teaching killing techniques.¹⁴ During a post-war trial, a witness and former 2nd Company member confirmed that this was indeed part of the role performed by Busse: "[Before one killing operation] we were instructed by a staff doctor who was at that time part of the battalion. He was from the SS and a very crazy person".¹⁵ From December 1938 to February 1940, Busse was the

¹¹ ZStL BArch (Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg) [hereafter ZStL] B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, pp.1591-95.

¹² BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber. SSO 269A, SS personnel file Lochbrunner, SSO 050, SS personnel file Becker. In Seeber's police file is a letter from Himmler's RFSS office dated 18 August 1941 to a number of SS and police officials regarding the deployment of the graduates of the 19th Officer Training course at Berlin-Köpenick. An order states that "The officers are to be on the march so as to arrive at the supply points [for Lochbrunner, Seeber and Becker as well as the four junior officers of Battalion 314, the supply point was Cracow] no later than 22 August 1941, from which they are to be set in march to said closed police battalions and reserve police battalions".

¹³ BAB SSO 125, SS personnel file Busse.

¹⁴ Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy*, p.182.

¹⁵ StAw München I 120 Js 157-158/74 [hereafter StA 120 Js], statement by Andörfer, 1975, p.886.

Standortarzt in Dachau where it is likely he gained knowledge and experience of the killing techniques that were passed on to members of Battalion 304 in Ukraine.¹⁶

Finally, at approximately the same time as the above personnel changes, there was a change in the battalion commander position. Major Willy Nickel who had been the battalion commander in Chemnitz and Warsaw was replaced on 22 August 1941. A message from Himmler and Daluge to Jeckeln sent on 21 August intercepted by British Intelligence stated that “Nickel is to be replaced, but remains to be used for something else”.¹⁷ A former member of the 2nd Company who, in his post-war witness statements proved to have a very good memory for names and places, recalled that Nickel was replaced at the battalion’s first stop in Ukraine, Starokonstantinov. “During one of the 2nd Company’s ‘fellowship evenings’, Nickel came to us personally to say goodbye”.¹⁸ It seems unlikely that Nickel was replaced for reasons of ideological commitment. Nickel was a veteran of the First World War, both a member of the Freikorps and the hard-line antisemitic *Deutsch-Völkischen Schutz- und Trutzbund*, an NSDAP member from 1929 and high-ranking SA officer from 1930-1936 prior to joining the police.¹⁹ Nickel, therefore, was not a career policeman like most of the NCOs of the 300-level police battalions, but an “old fighter” and SA man rewarded with a high-ranking entry into the police in 1936. The main reason for the personnel change more likely lay in that Nickel became ill in Warsaw; he apparently had to have seven teeth removed and developed rheumatic complaints.²⁰ Nickel’s removal from Battalion 304 didn’t hurt his career as he was promoted in November 1942, a promotion that coincided with his entry into the SS, to lieutenant-colonel and SS-*Standartenführer*.²¹

As the replacement for Nickel, Himmler suggested Major Karl Deckert who had been the battalion commander of Battalion 310 since 22 July 1941. Like Nickel, Deckert also had been in the Freikorps following the First World War and was also an “old fighter” who joined the NSDAP in 1932. Unlike Nickel, Deckert was an SS officer from 1938 and a career police officer from 1920. Deckert may have been considered by Daluge as well as Himmler as an ideal candidate. Prior to taking command of Battalion 310, Deckert had been Dr Lammers’ adjutant at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin and, likely due to his position, appears to have mixed in high NSDAP circles. In what remains of Deckert’s SS

¹⁶ BAB SSO 125, SS personnel file Busse.

¹⁷ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report, August 1941.

¹⁸ StA 120 Js, statement by Kluge, 1977, p.1138. Stefen Klemp stated that Nickel and his successor Deckert were battalion commanders in Warsaw. However, from the trial testimonies and British Intelligence reports, it appears that Nickel was replaced by Deckert in Starokonstantinov, therefore after the Battalion had left Warsaw. Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.76.

¹⁹ BAB SSO 349A, SS personnel file Nickel. Klemp, *Vernichtung*, pp.77-8. On the *Deutsch-Völkischen Schutz- und Trutzbund*, see Longerich, *Holocaust*, pp.13-14.

²⁰ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.78.

²¹ BAB SSO 349A, SS personnel file Nickel.

personal file, there is a telegram of congratulations from Daluege for the wedding of Deckert to the daughter of a *Reichsamtsleiter* in 1940.²² A field posting may well have presented an ideal opportunity for a career-minded social climber and SS- police officer. This appears to have been the impression of many of his former subordinates in Battalion 304. Many of those former policemen who remembered Deckert as post-war witnesses associated Deckert with the Party or SS through the wearing of the SS Rune, the golden party medal and, in particular, his SS uniform in addition to the fact that he came straight from a prominent post in the Chancellery.²³ It appears that Deckert had been sent to lead the battalion specifically for the upcoming massacres of Jewish civilians that the battalion would carry out; an opinion that seems to have been held by some battalion members. A former member of the 3rd Company who displayed a remarkable memory for details as a trial witness in 1975 stated that: "My personal opinion is that Deckert was posted to the battalion for this reason [the massacres]. This opinion was shared by many officers and other groups".²⁴ A former 2nd Company member had heard that Deckert "came to the front in order to move up the ranks of the SS".²⁵ A former *K-Staffel* member was of the opinion "that Battalion Commander Deckert was transferred at that time to the battalion only because of the Jewish actions [just mentioned]".²⁶ Care must be taken with these types of statements from trial witnesses who themselves were likely to have been directly involved in the killings, as they may be attempts to deflect culpability for their own actions by placing the blame on higher orders from an authority figure such as Deckert. However, given Deckert's background prior to his appointment as battalion commander and the timing of his arrival, it does seem plausible that he was indeed given this position primarily in relation to the upcoming mass murders.

During Deckert's trial that took place in the 1970s, many former policemen of Battalion 304 said that they could not remember Deckert. Undoubtedly, at least some of these men were trying to detach themselves from the mass killings or may have been wanting to protect Deckert. Many of those that stated they could not remember Deckert could often remember Nickel, their company or platoon officers and some other former comrades.²⁷ However, that Deckert was not remembered by many may also be an indication of how the battalion actually operated during this period in Ukraine. That more of the former battalion members remembered Nickel is perhaps not surprising given that Nickel was the Party *Stadtverordneter* in Chemnitz, the battalion home-base, built up the SA-

²² BAB SSO 138, SS personnel file Deckert.

²³ StA 120 Js. For example, statements by: Asmus, 1975, p.905; Schreiber, 1977, p.1071; Kaufmann, 1977, p.1144; Roszbach, 1980, p.1285.

²⁴ StA 120 Js, statement by Asmus, 1975, p.911.

²⁵ StA 120 Js, statement by Roszbach, 1980, p.1285.

²⁶ StA 120 Js, statement by Zimmerman, 1980, p.1301.

²⁷ StA 120 Js. For example, statements by: Andörfer, 1975, p.885; Beinert, 1975, p.899; Karls, 1976, p.974.

Feldjägerkorps in Saxony, and from 1936 was a higher-ranking policeman, presumably in the Chemnitz area, so may have been visible or had contact with some of the policemen of 304 before the formation of the battalion.²⁸ Additionally, in both Chemnitz and Warsaw the battalion was stationed in one place as a unit for an extended period of time so Nickel is likely to have been more visible. In Ukraine in autumn 1941 however, the battalion appears to have travelled in separate sub-units, probably in company strength, and only came together as a whole during extended stops. In Ukraine Deckert appears to have had much less contact with the battalion ranks than Nickel had. Many former battalion members testified that they had very little to do with Deckert and only saw him on rare occasions, many more were able to remember their platoon and company leaders.²⁹ It does seem plausible that the men of the rank and file had little if any contact with Deckert and that the authority figures with whom they had consistent contact were the platoon and company commanders. However, the few times when the battalion did come together and operated as a whole unit in summer and autumn 1941 were the occasions when the battalion carried out the mass killings in towns and cities along the route. Therefore, although it may be the case that they had little contact with him, at least for some, Deckert may have personified the orders that involved the battalion in repeated mass murder.

A number of post-war testimonies by former battalion members recalled speeches given by commanders after the battalion had left Warsaw. Rudolf Miksch, formerly of 2nd Company, recalled in 1975 that during a roll-call in Zamość, therefore just before the entry of the battalion into Ukraine, a speech was given to prepare the men for the mass executions.

[We were told] that at least one million too many Jews were living in the Ukraine and that we were to participate in their removal. Even though we knew at that point that these Jews were to be annihilated - we didn't know how until Starokonstantinov - we didn't think about it further. That meant that to many of the members of our battalion, the theoretical and practical ideological influences had taken effect in the respect that the annihilation of the Jews was seen as a necessity, or at least as something that one needn't worry about.³⁰

Other former battalion members who recalled speeches referring to their upcoming duties remembered these occurring actually in Ukraine and coinciding with Nickel's departure and Deckert's arrival. Kaufmann, another former member of the 2nd Company, recalled that one day the

²⁸ BAB SSO 349A, SS personnel file Nickel. Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.77.

²⁹ StA 120 Js. For example, statements by: Andörfer, 1975, p.885; Beinert, 1975, pp.899-900; Karls, 1976, p.974; Schreiber, 1977, p.1071; Kutschker, 1977, p.1124. Some witnesses that stated that they hardly ever saw Deckert also recalled him in connection with his SS uniform or Party insignia, affiliations that Deckert was trying to play down during his trial. This lends more credence to these statements as they were clearly not trying to protect Deckert.

³⁰ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.83.

battalion was gathered in a square and was introduced to the new commander, Deckert, by an SS and police officer.³¹ According to Kaufmann, this officer gave a speech in which he said, “among other things”, that “the battalion was to be used for resettling actions according to the order of the Führer. He himself would carry out every Führer order even though he has five or six children at home”. Nickel’s SS file shows that he had five children, so it seems likely that the officer giving the speech referred to by Kaufmann was in fact Nickel.³² Shortly after this speech (Kaufmann thought it was perhaps the day after), Deckert is supposed to have given more or less the same speech to the battalion: “I can remember that during his speech in Zhytomir, he said that the upcoming resettlement operations would be led by him personally. I saw Deckert only every now and then during the march and then it was only in the distance driving by”.³³ Two other former policemen recalled Deckert giving a speech upon arrival to the battalion. Haschke stated that at the farewell ceremony for Nickel, “Deckert told us that he brought some new orders and that the duties would not be pleasant”.³⁴ Asmus recalled that Deckert said that “what lay ahead of us had nothing to do with soldierly activities, but that “the soldier has to obey whatever is asked of him. What he meant by this we didn’t know at the time”.³⁵

These statements differ in a number of respects. Miksch’s statement in particular differs from the others not only in the timing of the speech but also its explicit nature. It is possible that a speech such as the one Miksch describes was given before the battalion entered Ukraine and started committing mass murder, perhaps by Nickel, and that the men of Battalion 304 were indeed ideologically primed to receive these types of orders. Care should be taken with regards to the other three accounts that make references to higher orders, “Führer orders” and expectations of obedience to orders, statements that appear to be fairly typical among former policemen and other members of perpetrator groups during post-war trials in order to deflect responsibility away from themselves and on to binding higher orders. Kaufmann stated that the speeches occurred in Zhytomir, but it is known that Deckert arrived while the battalion was in Starokonstantinov, the site of the first mass execution carried out by Battalion 304 and before the battalion had reached Zhytomir. Therefore, it appears that the speech or speeches were given in Starokonstantinov. It may also be possible that the HSSPF referred to by Kaufmann was in fact Jeckeln. Deckert recalled an evening when he was summoned to Jeckeln who told him that now he could do something; meaning the mass executions of Jews. It cannot be determined exactly when and where the conversation

³¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Kaufmann, 1977, p.1144.

³² BAB SSO 349A, SS personnel file Nickel.

³³ StA 120 Js, statement by Kaufmann, 1977, p.1144.

³⁴ StA 120 Js, statement by Haschke, 1980, p.1342.

³⁵ StA 120 Js, statement by Asmus, 1975, p.911.

took place. It is possible that Deckert met with Jeckeln in Starokonstantinov or just before.³⁶ Also the timing of the speech, probably on or around Deckert's arrival on 22 August, corresponds with the timing of Jeckeln's efforts to extend the killings in his area following Himmler's intervention on 12 August. In any case, as Battalion 304 was one of Jeckeln's "special purpose" units held in reserve up to this point, it is likely that Jeckeln would have had some personal influence on communicating the nature, though perhaps not precisely, of the unit's upcoming tasks. It is also more likely that Battalion 304 was given these types of instructions at this time than other battalions such as Battalion 314 that had been deployed into Ukraine earlier in July 1941.

A number of post-war statements by former battalion members suggest that upon departure from Warsaw, the policemen were not told of their specific tasks or destination, but that they were aware that they were headed south-east, perhaps to the Caucasus, and that they would be travelling along the *Durchgangsstrasse IV* (DG IV).³⁷ Running through the southern half of Ukraine, the DG IV would stretch 2,175 km and serve as the Wehrmacht's main supply line in the southern sector. The DG IV as such had not existed before the war but was a series of roads and highways that were to be joined together by SS and Wehrmacht planners with the use of forced labour. Responsibility for maintaining and improving DG IV was taken by the Todt Organisation (OT) and the SS took responsibility for providing the forced labour.³⁸ At the time of the entry of Battalion 304 in Ukraine in August, OT officials had already targeted Jews for forced labour on the road in the Zhytomir area and in the same region during early to mid-September OT and military planners had started to plan for seven labour camps to be spread between Vinnitsa and Gaisin for road construction. These plans were being made at the same time that Battalion 304 was travelling down that stretch of road.³⁹ Angrick has shown that until December 1941 there had only been a modest level of maintenance done on DG IV, in the most part due to the priority given by the units under Jeckeln's command to the annihilation of whole communities with little regard for economic interests. Only in December did Himmler take more of an interest in the movement of supplies on DG IV and in February 1942 agreed to bring DG IV in line with settlement policies.⁴⁰ From mid-August to mid-October 1941, the period when Battalion 304 was travelling on the DG IV, the tasks of the battalion seem to have been concerned more with the annihilation of Jewish communities than construction issues. However, it

³⁶ StA 120 Js, Deckert's testimony, 1981, p.1431-2. Deckert claimed that he replied to Jeckeln, "My God, these are still people. You can't do that". To which Jeckeln or his adjutant replied, "Deckert, you probably haven't recognised the sign of the times".

³⁷ StA 120 Js, statements by: Beinert, 1975, p.901; Karls, 1976, p.974; Rossbach, 1979, p.1285; Zimmermann, 1979, p.1300. Zimmermann stated that the battalion was informed that they were to be used for the protection of the oilfields in the Caucasus.

³⁸ Angrick, 'DG IV', pp.192-3. Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.62.

³⁹ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, pp.143-4.

⁴⁰ Angrick, 'DG IV', pp.194-7.

does appear that the actions taken by Battalion 304 along this stretch of road may have been couched in terms of security measures and perhaps related to the importance of the thoroughfare for the prosecution of the war. A former member of the 2nd Company acting as a witness during a post-war trial stated that the collections of people – the witness claimed that he didn't know that the people collected were Jews or that they were taken away and shot – was known as “securing the supply lines” (*zur Sicherung der Nachschublinien*).⁴¹ A former member of the *K-Staffel* stated that “the task of the battalion was also the security of railway stations and railway lines which were extremely vulnerable to the partisans”.⁴² Clearly the tasks of guarding and securing of transport links are more suited to stationary, localised units such as the soon-to-be-established gendarmerie stations rather than a mobile unit like Battalion 304 and, given the content of the training received by the battalion members, this would have been clear to all at the time. Unless of course the mass executions carried out by the battalion were indeed depicted as a necessary retaliatory or pre-emptive means of securing these essential supply lines, such as the DGIV; a rationale that depicted the entire Jewish population as partisans or partisan helpers. In his letter to the commander of the Orpo in the Warsaw district, Oberstleutnant Petsch on 29 November 1941, Deckert used the type of millennial language likely to have been common currency among SS officers:

We are in a war that has been forced upon us by Judea for our people's existence. Here considerations of human mildness must recede. In this war it is about wiping the slate clean and to protect our Greater German Reich for the future centuries from the Jewish world pest and the Asian danger from the east.⁴³

It is not clear whether explicit rationales regarding antisemitic security measures in the form of “resettlement” actions were given in the speeches by Nickel, Deckert or Jeckeln before the first massacre in Starokonstantinov or if these were the rationales employed after the actions. The speeches associated with Deckert's arrival as recalled by some former battalion members may have been vaguer concerning the battalion's upcoming involvement in mass murder. Nevertheless, it does appear that Deckert's arrival, and perhaps also the arrival of the three junior officers, were seen perhaps retrospectively by some as a point which started a decisive shift towards the direct involvement of the battalion in mass murder.

Starokonstantinov and Vinnitsa – early September 1941

According to the diary of a former policeman, the battalion arrived in Starokonstantinov on 21 August and left on 4 September 1941. At the time of the German occupation of the town on 8 July

⁴¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Roszbach, 1979, p.1286.

⁴² StA 120 Js, statement by Heinrichs, 1979, p.1312.

⁴³ Cited in Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.82.

there were approximately 6,000 Jews remaining. Before the town was transferred from a military to civilian administration in September, there were a number of executions carried out by German units against of the Jewish population: twenty Jews were shot soon after the occupation of the town; on 3 August companies of the 8th SS Infantry Regiment shot 302 men and 187 women on the pretext of not enough Jews showing up for labour detail and sabotage; some Jewish individuals deemed incapable of work were shot in early August and on 18 August approximately 150 young Jewish men and women were shot. The largest of these executions was carried out by Battalion 304 which shot at least 500 Jewish men, women and children on 2 September.⁴⁴

During the days leading up to the first mass execution, it appears that some units of the battalion were involved in the capture and execution of “Russian” parachutists. On 25 August, British Intelligence reported: “Police Battalion 304 is in action against parachute troops and captures 8 of them. The booty includes 4 parachutes and 15 kg of dynamite packs”.⁴⁵ A former member of the 3rd Company recalled an occasion near Starokonstantinov when he was involved in the shooting of five parachutists.

Meister Altmann [platoon leader in the 3rd Company] put together a group as leader of the execution squad including myself. A pit had been dug at the execution site and the Russians had to kneel individually facing the pit. They were shot one after the other...I remember that two or three shooters were shooting at one Russian. Meister Altmann wanted it that way so that each group would have its turn. They were shot in the neck. During the action an HSSPF was present.⁴⁶

Another former member of the 3rd Company remembered shooting parachutists on Jeckeln’s orders.⁴⁷ Two former members of the 1st Platoon, 2nd Company recalled participating in the shooting of five to eight “Red Army men” while in Starokonstantinov. Melzer, who was responsible for killing one of the men, remembered the shooting took place only about 100m from the accommodation.⁴⁸ It is not clear from these testimonies whether the executions were one and the same or different actions, but they do share a similarity in the number of men executed and the approximate timing of the executions. Therefore, in light of Jeckeln’s report, the battalion was involved in finding some Soviet soldiers just before the massacre in Starokonstantinov, but it is not clear if Jeckeln himself was present at the executions. That the executions, according to Melzer, took place close to the accommodation presumably in Starokonstantinov, suggests that there may be a connection between the capture and shooting of the Soviet soldiers and the following massacre of some of the

⁴⁴ Alexander Kruglov and Martin Dean, ‘Starokonstantinov’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, pp.1474-1475.

⁴⁵ NA HW 16/6.

⁴⁶ StA 120 Js, statement by Wolf, 1976, p.1042.

⁴⁷ StA 120 Js, statement by Kutschker, 1977, 1125.

⁴⁸ StA 120 Js, summary on Schumann, Miksch and Melzer, 1978, p. 1755.

town's Jewish population. A pretext that the soldiers were in some way helped by Jews of the town may have been used to justify the massacre of a large number of the Jewish residents. Platoon Commander Altmann was able to organise the executions so that a number of policemen under his command shared the experience of killing. It may be then no coincidence that the 3rd Company were chosen to act as the shooters for the first massacre.

Shortly before the massacre on 2 September 1941 the battalion was told in a briefing that Jews from the town were going to be shot and which units were to perform which tasks.⁴⁹ 1st Company was assigned the task of driving the Jews to a collection point, 2nd Company closed off the town and guarded the transport of the victims to the execution site which was done with trucks and the killing and the securing of the killing site was done by 3rd Company. Parts of the 2nd Company along with other units violently removed the Jews from their homes as identified by the local militia. One former policeman "heard that all the company commanders were present [at the killing site] along with the Major".⁵⁰ Just before they were shot, the victims were searched for jewellery and other possessions before they were made to pass through a corridor formed of 3rd Company men. According to one witness the shooting was done by two or three men in rubber coats with machine pistols. The same witness recalled that at least two of the platoon leaders of the 3rd Company were active at the execution site.⁵¹ A former member of the 1st Company recalled that "as my comrades came back from the pit they were so depressed that one could not talk to them".⁵² During the massacre on 2 September, at least 500 Jewish men, women and children were murdered. About a month after this massacre a ghetto was established that contained about 5,000 Jews of the town and most of these people were murdered by the Sipo and SD, with assistance from German gendarmerie and Ukrainian police, on 20 May 1942.⁵³

The battalion left Starokonstantinov two days after the massacre on 4 September and headed to Vinnitsa. In Vinnitsa on 5 September the battalion carried out the massacre of approximately 2,200 Jewish men, women and children.⁵⁴ At the beginning of the German occupation there were approximately 18,000 Jews living in the city, at least 10,000 of whom were killed by Reserve Police Battalion 45 on 19 September 1941.⁵⁵ As in Starokonstantinov the battalion was gathered together

⁴⁹ StA 120 Js, summaries on Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1979, p.1753 and Jäger, 1981, p.1771. Hoffmann claimed that he was informed by his platoon leader at 6am on the morning of the massacre, summary on Hoffmann, 1975, p.1672.

⁵⁰ ZStL B 162/26795, p.1579. StA 120 Js, summary on Schumann, Miksch and Melzer, 1978, p.1753, summary on Jäger, 1981, pp.1771-2, and statement by Gaudes, 1976, p.1055.

⁵¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Wolf, 1976, pp.1039-40.

⁵² StA 120 Js, statement by Gaudes, 1976, p.1055.

⁵³ Kruglov and Dean, 'Starokonstantinov', p.1475.

⁵⁴ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1596.

⁵⁵ Kruglov and Dean, 'Starokonstantinov', p.1576.

before the impending *Aktion* and briefed.⁵⁶ In this case it appears that volunteers were requested from across the battalion to carry out the shooting. As group leader in the 3rd Company, Jäger was requested to provide a shooter from his group. However, Jäger felt that the members of his group were not up to killing women and children so he volunteered himself. During his shift of one and a half hours he shot at least 100 individuals. Perhaps because some of the volunteers had not yet shot anybody, Schumann of 2nd Company was asked to demonstrate how to carry out the killing as he had attended the “special training” on killing in Cracow. Schumann demonstrated by killing at least 15 people before returning to command his own group at the collection point, once he was satisfied that the volunteers could carry out the task.⁵⁷

Gaisin – September 1941

On 6 September 1941, the day after the massacre in Vinnitsa, units of Battalion 304 arrived in Gaisin, a town located about 82 km south-east of Vinnitsa, where it would stay until 19 September. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, about 2,000 Jews of a pre-war population of 4,109 had not fled the town.⁵⁸ On 16 September at least 1,409 Jewish men, women and children of Gaisin were killed along with 29 Jews from Ladyzhin, a nearby town where a unit of Battalion 304 had carried out a massacre on 13 September.⁵⁹ The town was occupied by the Wehrmacht on 25 July 1941 and before the transfer to the civilian administration sometime in autumn 1941 the town was administered by the OK 1/275 (Ortskommandantur) under a Major Heinrich. By the time Battalion 304 arrived, the OK had organised the implementation of anti-Jewish measures which included the wearing of armbands, forced labour and prohibition from leaving the town. At some point in summer or autumn 1941 an “open ghetto” was created by Major Heinrich, but it is not clear if this was done before or after the first massacre on 16 September.⁶⁰ In Gaisin the units of the battalion were stationed in numerous buildings spread throughout the town and, like the other German occupiers in the town, probably took advantage of their position by exploiting the local population. Marz, a former member of a Wehrmacht communications squad stationed in Gaisin, recalled that

⁵⁶ StA 120 Js, summaries on Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, p.1755, and Pöhl, 1988, p.1782.

⁵⁷ StA 120 Js, summary on Schumann, 1978, p.1755.

⁵⁸ Kruglov and Dean, ‘Gaisin’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, p.1527.

⁵⁹ Kruglov and Dean, ‘Gaisin’, p.1527. The West German courts found that the massacre in Gaisin involved at least 1,700, “but probably 2-3,000” victims. StA 120 Js, Summary Report, 1981, p.1635. The East German processes found that the massacre involved 4,000 victims, 120, Js, summary on Hoffmann, 1975, p.1683.

⁶⁰ Kruglov and Dean, ‘Gaisin’, p.1527. StA 120 Js, statement by Schneider, 1976, p.946. Schneider, formerly of OK 1/275 stated as a witness that in September 1941 the Jews were not yet registered or ghettoised. It may have been the case that the Jewish residents of Gaisin had not been “ghettoised” before the massacre on 16 September, but it seems likely that most would have been registered by the Security Police and SD, the OK, or perhaps by Battalion 304 before the massacre.

the six-man squad were “assigned” two female Jews as cleaners.⁶¹ According to one former member of the communications squad, policemen from Battalion 304 went out of their way to do “little harassments to the Jews”.⁶² According to another former member of the communications squad, Deckert acted particularly ruthlessly against the Jews of the town.⁶³ Geiger, another former communications man, recalled Deckert as “a very arrogant officer...very distant towards his subordinates”. During a post-war trial Geiger insisted that he remembered Deckert in part due to an incident in which he threatened Geiger’s friend Marz with a “war court” for “joking with his cleaning girl”. According to Geiger, “nothing happened to Marz but the cleaning girl was immediately fired and ordered out of the house...she was probably killed during the “cleansing operation” (Geiger used the term *Säuberungsaktion* as a witness in the late-1970s).⁶⁴

In addition to “little harassments” against the town’s Jewish population, while stationed in Gaisin the battalion was involved in a number of executions and massacres before the large massacre in Gaisin on 16 September. On 12 September three Jews were executed in connection with stealing property.⁶⁵ A few days after the arrival of the battalion in Gaisin, 15 Soviet POWs were shot, probably by the 2nd Company. On 13 September 486 Jews were killed near the town of Ladyzhin. On the day some units travelled by truck from Gaisin to Ladyzhin. Schumann’s group of 2nd Company were also involved in this massacre, but it is not clear which other units of Battalion 304. The East German courts found that Schumann himself was responsible for shooting at least 15 of the victims.⁶⁶

On the morning of 12 September a “propaganda march” took place in which the Jews of the town were collected by the battalion and “made to march through the streets in a sort of procession”.⁶⁷ Lower has highlighted the fact that the German practice of forcing the Jews to march through the town was common and primarily done to involve the local populations in the anti-Jewish measures.⁶⁸ There also appears to have been a selection made in which those considered to be skilled workers were separated. Motelj Jusim, a blacksmith by trade was not killed on 16 September,

⁶¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Marz, formerly of Fernsprechtrupp 36. 1976, p.964.

⁶² StA 120 Js, statement by Marz, 1976, p.964.

⁶³ StA 120 Js, statement by Langer, 1976, p.1059.

⁶⁴ StA 120 Js, statement by Geiger, 1977, p.1173. The trial for which the former members of the communications squad were acting as witnesses was against Deckert, so they would have been asked for their recollections of him in particular.

⁶⁵ StA 120 Js, Summary Report, 1981, 1635.

⁶⁶ StA 120 Js, summary of Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, pp.1756-7. Schumann was also believed to have fired a full magazine of his machine-pistol indiscriminately into the pit at the end of the massacre.

⁶⁷ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1601. StA 120 Js, statement by Marz, p.965.

⁶⁸ Lower, ‘Pogroms’, p.228.

but his wife and three children were.⁶⁹ As in Starokonstantinov and Vinnitsa, on the morning of the *Aktion* the battalion was gathered to receive their orders. Langer of the communications squad remembered the men standing lined up in front of Deckert.⁷⁰ This may have been a point when the battalion was given a rationale for the tasks they were about to carry out. A former 2nd Company member recalled one such justification for Gaisin: "At the time they said that the Jews were shot because they were suspected of being involved in the blowing up of a German hospital".⁷¹ A former 1st Company member recalled a strikingly similar reason given for the massacre in Gaisin: "We were told that the Jews were shot because they had killed badly wounded German soldiers. One could actually see 40-50 grave crosses. These soldiers were said to have been the seriously wounded left behind and were reportedly killed by the Jews. So they told us at the time".⁷² A former member of the 3rd Company recalled an incident that appears to have been related to these stories. "One day during the first days in Gaisin came the command to search the houses of the Jewish population of Gaisin for weapons, ammunition and explosives. The Jewish homes were already marked by Jewish stars...As I understood it, the searches proved fruitless. Suddenly a few days later it appeared that weapons and ammunition had been found after all".⁷³ According to the witness the *Aktion* proceeded shortly after this revelation. That three former policemen, representing all three companies of the battalion recalled such similar stories suggests that either a story regarding the Jews responsibility for the deaths of German soldiers was in fact an excuse used by the battalion leadership at the time, or there had been some discussion amongst former policemen before the trial. It is perhaps not inconceivable that this was the rationale provided by the battalion leadership at the time and, perhaps, at the briefing for this particular massacre in Gaisin. Waitman Beorn has shown that in the summer and autumn of 1941 a formula that was mobilised on the ground level in the Soviet Union attempted to explain the mass murder of Jews under the guise of an anti-partisan war: "all Jews were Bolsheviks, all Bolsheviks were partisans (or at the very least supporters of partisans, and thus, all Jews were also partisans or partisan supporters)".⁷⁴ The blaming of local Jews collectively for actions that may or may not have been taken by retreating Red Army soldiers or partisans would not have been a deviation from the norm as far as rationales given by numerous German killing units in former Soviet territory since June 1941 and to a lesser extent also in Poland from 1939-41 are concerned.

⁶⁹ StA 120 Js, 'Sonderband I', statement by Jusim, 1969, p.103.

⁷⁰ StA 120 Js, statement by Langer, 1976, p.1059. Langer recalled the briefing as taking place the day before the massacre.

⁷¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Nabielek, 1975, p.891.

⁷² StA 120 Js, statement by Gaudes, 1976, p.1055.

⁷³ StA 120 Js, statement by Wolf, 1976, p.1043.

⁷⁴ Beorn, *Marching into Darkness*, p.95.

The *Aktion* on 16 September began at 6 am with the 2nd Company forcibly removing the Jews from their homes which had been marked by the Ukrainian police the day before and brought to the market square. The escorting of the victims to the shooting site and the guarding of the square was done by 3rd Company and part of 2nd Company. The shooting, securing of the shooting site and the collection of valuables was this time carried out by 1st Company.⁷⁵ A former member of the Wehrmacht communications squad wanted to make it clear that the OK had nothing to do with the collection and shooting of the Jews.⁷⁶ No evidence emerged from the post-war trials that indicated the direct participation of the soldiers in the massacre, but that does not mean that some did not participate in some form or other; perhaps as spectators. During the round-up members of the 2nd Company mishandled, poked with bayonets and beat the victims with rifle butts.⁷⁷ At least some 2nd Company men appear to have been very thorough in their searching for hidden victims, looking through rubbish, holes and other potential hiding places.⁷⁸ Aside from marking the homes of the Jews for the German policemen, the local Ukrainian population also helped during the round-up. A former member of the Wehrmacht communications squad recalled that: “the Ukrainians harboured a certain hatred for the Jews. They even betrayed hiding Jews to the SS and police”.⁷⁹ Few Jewish residents would have escaped the round-up. Michail Hendelsmann recalled in 1969 how as a young man, about 22 years old, he escaped the round-up in the morning by jumping out of a window and fled to another town returning only two or three days later.⁸⁰

In escorting the victims to the execution site, which was situated about 2 km outside of the town, members of the 3rd Company used violence including kicking, punching and constant pushing.⁸¹ As the victims reached the shooting site they were forced to hand over their clothing, shoes, money and other valuables that were to be deposited in the specific boxes.⁸² The former battalion bursar (*Kassenleiter*), Liethen and his subordinate, Klarner, recalled receiving a large amount of money and gold teeth following the *Aktion*; the money was put in a Red Cross box which was being used as a cash register. Liethen claimed that he couldn't remember where the gold teeth came from.⁸³ On 17 September, the day after the massacre, Major Heinrich reported receipt of “several items of

⁷⁵ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1601. Kruglov and Dean, ‘Gaisin’, p.1527.

⁷⁶ StA 120 Js, statement by Marz, 1976, p.965.

⁷⁷ StA 120 Js, statements by Langer, 1976, p.1059 and Geiger, 1977, p.1174.

⁷⁸ StA 120 Js, summaries on Hoffmann, 1975, p.1682, Hinsche and Huster, 1977, p.1740 and Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, p.1757.

⁷⁹ StA 120 Js, statement by Langer, 1976, p.1061.

⁸⁰ StA 120 Js, Sonderband I, statement by Hendelsmann, 1969, p.109.

⁸¹ StA 120 Js, summary on Jäger, 1981, p.1773.

⁸² StA 120 Js, Sonderband I, statement by Marija Goldschmidt, 1969, p.117.

⁸³ StA 120 Js, statements by Liethen, 1977, p.1192 and Klarner, 1977, p.1192.

jewellery” that had been handed in by the Ukrainian militia.⁸⁴ It is not known what was done with the stolen valuables and money. The victims were forced to lie down in prepared ditches in groups of about ten people and shot with machine-pistols.⁸⁵ Only one witness, Schumann, testified that Deckert was at the shooting site. Langer of the Wehrmacht communications platoon, who appears to have watched the actions unfolding in the town, assumes that Deckert was at the execution site as he didn’t see him in the town following the rounding-up of the victims. Three witnesses remembered seeing Hanstein, the 1st Company commander at the killing site, one recalled that Mayr, 2nd Company commander, was present, one remembers Meister Weigand the 2nd platoon leader in 2nd Company and two Lieutenant Welsch the 1st Platoon, 3rd Company leader.⁸⁶ It appears that there was usually a strong officer and platoon leader presence at the sites of these massacres. Survivor Marija Goldschmidt was able to provide testimony on the killing site at Gaisin in 1969:

It wasn’t possible to flee anywhere because on top of the wall [an earthen wall on one side of the ditches] was a ring of armed Germans. I and the other unlucky people were told to undress. I was standing there with only my nightgown, when a tall German approached with officer shoulder bits. He was humane. He took me by the hand and led me to the path and said that I should take my child and flee to another village where I could escape death. As the German led me away...I saw how the Germans threw children into the pits alive and another German who was shooting adults with his shirt sleeves rolled up to the elbow. As well as him, other Germans were shooting. All this I saw as I was being led away from the shooting place by the German officer...It is not clear to me why he showed humanity towards me and my child. Perhaps he heard my child screaming and saved us from death because of that.⁸⁷

Marija Goldschmidt did escape to another village with her child and then joined a partisan group in the forests. Her parents and three sisters were killed in the massacre on 16 September. It cannot be established who the officer was that chose to save Goldschmidt and her child, or why he did so. There are no similar accounts that emerged from the West and East German trial proceedings of officers saving people. It may have been that an officer had more freedom in his movements than a policeman from the rank and file and therefore had greater opportunity to perform such an action. It may also have been the case that the situation at the killing site was somewhat chaotic or perhaps busy with many German policemen and auxiliaries coming and going, so an individual would have been able to carry this action out unnoticed or unchallenged. Nevertheless, this account shows that if there were opportunities for policemen to perform such deeds at that stage of the killing process, there were plenty of opportunities to do so at other stages; in particular the round-up. It is of course conceivable that the officer in question may well have been capable of saving some people and

⁸⁴ Kruglov and Dean, ‘Gaisin’, p.1527.

⁸⁵ StA 120 Js, summary of Pöhlig, 1988, p.1783.

⁸⁶ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1602.

⁸⁷ StA 120 Js, Sonderband I, statement by Goldschmidt, 1969, p.117.

contribute to the killing of others on the same day and therefore may not have fundamentally disagreed with the overall task.

Other survivor testimonies show that levels of diligence and perhaps, in some cases, exuberance towards performing the task of destroying the Jewish community of Gaisin varied among the policemen. Elisabeth Shor claimed at the shooting site that she was not Jewish. A German policeman asked an interpreter who said that he could not confirm the girl's "nationality", so the German let her go.⁸⁸ Michael Blumenblatt, at the time a boy of 14, remembered other Jewish women claiming they were Ukrainians at the shooting site and, after a few questions from the Germans, were let go. Blumenblatt did the same thing and was let go by a German also. It is feasible that there were some policemen in Battalion 304 who had difficulties with the killing of women and children but may have been less troubled with contributing to the murder of men. The whole process and performance of the mass murder of the Jewish community in Gaisin as related by members of the Wehrmacht communications squad and especially Marija Goldschmidt's harrowing account of the killing site appear to have differed significantly from the more traditional, military-style firing squads that some units of Battalion 314 used in the murder of Jewish men only a month previously in Volhynia.

For other members of the battalion, the murder of women and children in this way does not appear to have been too great a threshold to cross. Langer, formerly of the communications squad, related a conversation with a battalion member on cordon duty:

The sentry told me that a unit of volunteers was sought for the shooting operation. They would get special rations. Men had volunteered but he had not volunteered as he didn't want to shoot anyone. He didn't tell me who had asked for volunteers. I asked him if maybe participation in the firing squad took place under duress, but he replied that this was not the case, only volunteers were eligible.⁸⁹

Gross, another member of the communications squad recalled a policeman talking to his group about the shooting:

That man was completely finished with his nerves and wanted to talk about the event to cleanse his soul. He said 'No one is being made to shoot, I can only be used for cordoning duty'. He went on to say that some of his comrades were acting in a blood frenzy.⁹⁰

At Gaisin the responsibility for forming the firing squad and other tasks at the shooting site were with the 1st Company under 1st Lieutenant Hanstein and Lieutenant Becker. The majority of the volunteers may have come from the 1st Company, whose turn it was, but the division of labour

⁸⁸ StA 120 Js, Sonderband I, statement by Shor, 1969, p.123.

⁸⁹ StA 120 Js, statement by Langer, 1977, p.1064.

⁹⁰ StA 120 Js, statement by Gross, 1977, p.1192.

among the sub-units was fluid at Gaisin and battalion members from the other companies ended up performing a number of tasks on the day, including at the execution site. Hoffman of the 2nd Company was initially used during the round-up of the victims. He was then ordered by Company Commander Mayr, to help in the transport of the victims to the execution, and then to assist the shooters at the execution site, which he did. We have seen how Schumann was involved in more than one task during the day, including the initial demonstration and supervision of the killing. Melzer, also of the 2nd Company, was involved in the transport of the victims to the execution site, and later himself shot about 20 victims.⁹¹ Pöhlig of the communications platoon throughout the day was involved in the removal of the victims from their homes, the escort of the victims to the execution site, the cordoning chain at the killing site and finally he was asked by an officer at the site to shoot; which he did.⁹² Different officers are likely to have been put on command at different locations during the killing process and are likely to have commandeered men at times from other units as they came and went. However, if only volunteers were eligible to perform as shooters, as it appears they were, men like Pöhlig, Hoffmann, Schumann and Melzer would have been requested rather than ordered, if indeed they hadn't already volunteered of their own accord.

Sub-units of the battalion left Gaisin over the following couple of days and were reported to be on the march to Kirovohrad on 19 September.⁹³ Following the massacre, the remaining Jews of Gaisin were forced into an "open ghetto" until 17 November 1941 when, with the exception of 120-150 skilled workers, they were shot also by a gendarmerie unit and Ukrainian militia. Most of the skilled workers were shot in May 1943 by a Sipo unit and Ukrainian militia.⁹⁴

Kirovohrad and Uman – September and October 1941

In September and October 1941 Police Battalion 304 continued to comb the route of DG IV on the stretch of roads between Gaisin and Oleksandriia, carrying out a number of massacres until the winter conditions forced the battalion to turn back north-west towards Kiev. Somewhere between Gaisin and Kirovohrad and sometime between 17 and 20 September, it appears that the 2nd Company were involved in at least one massacre of men, women and children. In the East German trial against Hoffmann, it was found that during this period in a small village at least 450 victims were murdered in a massacre that only took about an hour to perpetrate. Following the massacre the men of the shooting unit were transported back to the village from the shooting site and given

⁹¹ StA 120 Js, summaries on Hoffmann, 1975, pp.1682-3, and Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, p.1757.

⁹² StA 120 Js, summary on Pöhlig, 1988, p.1783. Pöhlig claimed he shot one person before evading duty.

⁹³ NA HW 16/6. GCCS report for the period 1.9 to 30.9.1941.

⁹⁴ StA 120 Js, Summary Report, 1981, p.1636. Sonderband I, statements by Jusim, 1969, p.103 and Handelsmann, 1969, p.110.

alcohol.⁹⁵ In the trial against Miksch, also of the 2nd Company, it was found that he participated in the murder of 40-50 old men, women and children in a small village during the same three day period just after leaving Gaisin.⁹⁶ The disparity in the number of victims between the two accounts suggest they were in fact two separate incidents. It is unclear whether or not it was only the 2nd Company under Captain Mayr that carried out these massacres. However, it is significant that the unit involved appear to have become so practiced in carrying out mass murder that they were able to murder such a large number of people in a short space of time. At least some of the sub-units arrived in the city of Kirovohrad, the capital of the Kirovohrad Oblast, on 20 September and the battalion would be stationed there until 12 October 1941.

On 30 September in Kirovohrad the battalion carried out the murder of 4,200 Jews. Most of these victims were old men, women and children, but among the victims were also 600 POWs.⁹⁷ Starting in the early hours of the morning the 1st and 2nd Companies drove the Jewish residents from their homes which had been previously marked by the Ukrainian militia. The victims were transported from the collection point to the killing site outside of the city also by the 1st and 2nd Companies. At the shooting site, the 2nd Platoon of 3rd Company (probably under the leadership of Lieutenant Rudi Seeber) removed clothes and valuables from the victims. The other two platoons of 3rd Company with volunteers from 1st Company carried out the shooting.⁹⁸ It is not clear who was leading the *Aktion* overall as Deckert was not placed at the scene by any post-war witnesses. However, as the battalion as a whole was barracked in Kirovohrad, it seems very likely that Deckert was involved either in the city or at the shooting site. Post-war witnesses cited Hanstein and Lieutenant Becker (both 1st Company) as the commanders of the round-up and other witnesses cited Company Commanders Hanstein (1st Company) and Mayr (2nd Company) as being involved in the shooting along with a number of NCOs from across the battalion.⁹⁹ While stationed in Kirovohrad the battalion was involved in a number of smaller scale *Aktionen*. At some point during the stay, units of the 2nd Company were involved in the killing of about 15 exhausted and starving POWs. According to the findings of the East German prosecutors, the prisoners were thrown bread and were shot while they were grasping for it.¹⁰⁰ On 4 October units of Battalion 304 carried out the murder of 305 Jews in Oleksandriia, a town east of Kirovohrad.¹⁰¹ On 6 October, units of the battalion carried out the

⁹⁵ StA 120 Js, summary on Hoffmann, 1975, pp.1683-4.

⁹⁶ StA 120 Js, summary on Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, p.1758.

⁹⁷ StA 120 Js, summary on Hoffmann, 1975, p.1686. Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.36. Pohl presumes that this massacre also involved SK 4b. However, no evidence of this unit's involvement emerged during the post-war trials.

⁹⁸ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1611.

⁹⁹ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, pp.1612-19.

¹⁰⁰ StA 120 Js, summary on Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, p.1758. According to the findings of the trial, this particular incident involved Miksch of 2nd Company. Statement by Wolf, p.1045.

¹⁰¹ Kruglov, 'Jewish Losses', p.276.

arrest and execution of a number of supposed communists as identified by the local militia in Kirovohrad, including a Soviet commissar.¹⁰²

On 7 October units from all three Companies of Battalion 304 travelled from Kirovohrad to Uman by truck in order to carry out the massacre of the Jews there the following day.¹⁰³ On 8 October, about 5,500 Jewish men, women and children of the city and about 500 POWs were shot by these units.¹⁰⁴ Presumably a sizeable portion of the battalion remained in Kirovohrad and did not participate in this particular massacre. Uman is situated west of Kirovohrad on the road to Gaisin, and was home to over 13,000 Jews, according to a 1939 census. The organisation of the massacre followed approximately the same pattern as the previous large-scale massacres in Starokonstantinov, Vinnitsa, Gaisin and Kirovohrad. On this occasion the 2nd Company were operating at the execution area along with volunteers from the other two Companies.¹⁰⁵ Following this massacre, only about 1,500 Jews remained in the “open ghetto”.¹⁰⁶ The final *Aktion* that is known to have been carried out by Battalion 304 before the battalion took its winter quarters in Kiev took place in an unknown village near Znamianka where 47 Jewish men were shot on 14 October. On the same day as this massacre a unit of the 2nd Company handed over three Soviet “functionaries” to an SD unit, so it appears that the two incidents were probably connected.¹⁰⁷

Battalion 304 left Kirovohrad for its assigned winter quarters in Kiev probably around the same time as the massacre in Znamianka, arriving in Kiev on 19 October 1941.¹⁰⁸ The policemen of the battalion travelled (most by bicycle) all the way from Warsaw to Oleksandriia in the east and back north to Kiev in a journey lasting 68 days from 13 August to 19 October 1941.¹⁰⁹ During this journey collectively the battalion murdered at least 15,658 people from the first large massacre in Starokonstantinov on 2 September to the massacre in Znamianka on 14 October; a period of 43 days. The vast majority of these victims were Jewish civilians and the majority of these appear to

¹⁰² StA 120 Js, summaries on Hoffmann, 1975, p.1686, Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978, p.1759, and Jäger, 1981, p.1773. According to the findings of the Hoffmann trial, on this occasion there were eight men captured and probably shot.

¹⁰³ StA 120 Js, summary on Jäger, 1981, p.1773.

¹⁰⁴ Kruglov, ‘Jewish Losses’, states there were 5,400 Jewish civilians and 600 POWs shot, p.276; In Kruglov, ‘Uman’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, p.1607, the totals are given as 5,000 Jewish civilians and 400 POWs and the East German courts found there to have been 4-5,000 Jews and 400 POWs murdered in Uman on 8 October, ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1622.

¹⁰⁵ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1622.

¹⁰⁶ Kruglov, ‘Uman’, p.1607.

¹⁰⁷ Kruglov, ‘Jewish Losses’, p.276. StA 120 Js, summary on Schumann, Melzer and Miksch, 1978. The East German proceedings found that Miksch (2nd Company), was involved in the shooting of 20 men near Znamianka. 25 men were taken from a prison and 20 were shot by Miksch’s unit. Five men were let go because they were not Jews.

¹⁰⁸ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1592.

¹⁰⁹ Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.84.

have been the old and sick, women and children. This figure only accounts for the massacres that have been documented so the total of victims within this period is almost certain to have been far greater. Deckert was certainly satisfied with the performance of the battalion under his command. In his letter to Petsch on 29 November 1941 while in Kiev, Deckert wrote:

Since I have had the honour of leading this battalion the men have behaved in an exemplary way in carrying out their assignments...The opinion of HSSPF General Jeckeln that [Battalion 304] is to be considered as the best battalion in the operational area of Ukraine bears persuasive witness to this.¹¹⁰

When HSSPFs Jeckeln and Prützmann exchanged positions in late-October 1941 it appears from an intercepted message by British Intelligence that Jeckeln wanted to take Battalion 304 under Major Deckert north with him.¹¹¹

In the information that emerged from the post-war investigations on the massacres committed by Battalion 304, a general pattern could be observed. The lower-level commanders, including the NCO platoon leaders, were informed the evening before or in the morning of an impending *Aktion*. The companies and platoons were divided according to their tasks and volunteers were found to carry out the shootings which would be led by the company commanders at the execution site. The Jewish victims were removed from their homes that had been marked by the local militia and taken to a collection point. From there the victims were driven in marching columns or in trucks to the execution site which would be outside of the town. At the execution site, the victims would be robbed of their valuables and clothes and were forced to go through a corridor formed of policemen to the pits, ditches or ravines. There in groups of 5-10 the victims were shot after being forced to lie in the pits. The shooting squad was replaced after one or one and a half hours and had a three to four hour break until the next turn. It was estimated that each shooter would murder 30-60 people in an hour. The shooters wore rubber coats and were given alcohol and cigarettes. Sometimes members of the SD were present at the execution site, as was the battalion Doctor Busse, presumably in supervisory roles. The massacres were always completed by late-afternoon and the pits were covered with chlorinated lime then covered with earth.¹¹²

Despite apparently following a systemised routine, as the example of Gaisin, probably the third large massacre carried out by Battalion 304, shows, the massacres were not necessarily that smoothly run and involved the use of extreme violence by policemen (in addition to the actual shooting) at every stage of the procedure. However, although each stage of the procedure involved an extreme level of

¹¹⁰ Cited in Klemp, *Vernichtung*, pp.81-2.

¹¹¹ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 1.10 to 14.11.41.

¹¹² ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, pp.1629-31.

violence and were in themselves necessary components of the killing process, it appears that the battalion leadership attempted to lessen the burden of the actual shooting by rotating the main tasks of the companies with each massacre. In Starokonstantinov the 3rd Company was stationed at the killing site and carried out the shooting with other volunteers from across the battalion. In Vinnitsa the shooting appears to have been carried out by volunteers from across the battalion; in Ladyzhin it was the turn of the 2nd Company to be stationed at the shooting site; in Gaisin the 1st Company, the unknown village between Gaisin and Kirovohrad the 2nd Company; Kirovohrad, 1st Company again and Uman, 2nd Company. For the lower ranks, it appears that only volunteers were eligible to do the shooting and “there were always enough volunteers”.¹¹³ However, this does not mean that there was no coercion involved. One former policeman recalled that Hanstein demanded that the NCOs of his company (1st Company) had to participate in the shooting, but the same man testified that he refused this demand and suffered no disadvantages as a result.¹¹⁴ According to a former member of the *K-Staffel*, the shooters received bonuses in the form of cinema visits, food and alcohol.¹¹⁵ These measures suggest that generally the act of shooting was not considered to be a desirable task by a considerable proportion of the battalion’s ranks. The weight of the demands on the rank and file policemen to participate as shooters is likely to have varied according to the commanding officer involved. A number of former policemen testified that there were a number of “radical types” who always seemed to have been at the forefront of things.¹¹⁶ It does appear that there was a group of policemen who were willing participants; men like Schumann, Miksch and Hanstein who lessened the demands on the less enthusiastic policemen to participate as shooters.

The concluding report of the East German trials against former members of Battalion 304 stated that only a few questioned showed any personal sadness or regret for their experiences. Only one former policeman admitted that he found the experience of the shootings too much and had to return to the barracks before the end of the *Aktion*.¹¹⁷ A few witnesses stated that a number of men tried to avoid participation in shooting and it does appear that some of the policemen were unable to cope with the battalion’s murderous tasks.¹¹⁸ A former member of the Wehrmacht communications platoon in Gaisin recalled a conversation with a member of Battalion 304 during which the man explained that he “wanted to get away from it”.¹¹⁹ A former sergeant in the *Sicherungsabteilung* of the *Durchgangsstrasse IV* recalled coming across a young policemen among a group of policemen on

¹¹³ StA 120 Js, statement by Hentschel, 1976, p.1003.

¹¹⁴ StA 120 Js, statement by Gaudes, 1976, p.1054.

¹¹⁵ StA 120 Js, statement by Leidenberger, 1981, p.1411.

¹¹⁶ StA 120 Js, statements by Asmus, 1975, p.911 and Hentschel, 1976, p.1003.

¹¹⁷ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1631.

¹¹⁸ Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.934.

¹¹⁹ StA 120 Js, statement by Marz, 1976, p.965.

bicycles coming from Kirovohrad during the winter of 1941-42. "This young man had completely lost his nerves and wanted to shoot himself. When I asked him why he said that his unit was constantly on the move to shoot Jews and that he couldn't do it anymore".¹²⁰ Asmus, a former 3rd Company member, stated that he'd heard about the shootings carried out by the 1st Company in Gaisin: "It was said that during this *Aktion*, some of the participants lost their nerves so that they just shot around. The shooting *Aktion* must have been badly organised because, as I heard, some of the shooting squad refused to shoot the Jews".¹²¹ No other testimony confirmed Asmus' statement. However, it is significant that Asmus blames the loss of nerves and refusals to take part by some policemen on bad organisation. This seems to suggest that officers and perhaps also NCOs were responsible for ensuring that individual policemen were allocated tasks that they were capable of carrying out which would alleviate additional strains on the perpetrators by ensuring the smooth running of the *Aktion* at their particular stations. Some policemen found the task of murdering unarmed civilians disagreeable to the extent that they did try to avoid participation, particularly at the killing site and there were some that became psychologically incapable of participating. However, with the exception of Asmus' statement on Gaisin, there is no evidence to suggest that at any point the battalion as a whole struggled to carry out the massacres. This does not mean that there was no concern on the part of the battalion leadership over the morale of the men and their collective ability to be able to carry out orders. Deckert expressed this concern in his letter to Petsch regarding the sending back of three policemen to be questioned over shooting a Jewish man in Warsaw, arguing that "Here [Ukraine] the same *Wachtmeister* would be punished by me if he *didn't* [my emphasis] carry out a shooting order...This method can only confuse my men and make them insecure and could cause a loosening of discipline".¹²² It is not known what the punishment would have been as no evidence from any of the post-war trials emerged that indicated that a policeman from the rank and file from either Battalion 304 or 314 had ever been punished for refusing to shoot. There are however a few accounts of individuals who refused to take part in the actual shooting and suffered no consequences as a result. This does not mean that pressure was not put on individuals to participate by shooting, whether through peer pressure, career concerns or indeed the threat of punishment, however mild, which is likely to have depended on the officer concerned. Equally as importantly, it appears that the battalion leadership was mindful of the men's reactions to the tasks carried out by the unit and their capacity as a group to continue to carry out the tasks. As we have seen, a number of battalion members at some point appear to have "lost their nerves" during the massacres. Therefore, on the one hand there was an attempt to spread the responsibility

¹²⁰ StA 120 Js, statement by Leist, 1975 p.936.

¹²¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Asmus, 1975, p.909.

¹²² Cited in Klemp, *Vernichtung*, p.81.

for killing as widely as possible throughout the battalion by rotating the tasks of the three companies. On the other hand the fluidity of the *Aktionen* as far as individuals performing multiple tasks during the same massacre is concerned, as well as the emphasis on the use of volunteers, is where the “eager” participants were given ample opportunity to come to the fore giving more opportunity for those who were less enthusiastic to fade into the background. How many of these eager killers were the “many” ideologically motivated battalion members mentioned by Miksch (Miksch appears to have considered himself as one of them and his actions suggest that this was probably indeed the case), that considered the massacres of entire Jewish communities as a “necessity”, is not clear. What is clear from the trial records is that many of the witnesses and accused felt much more comfortable admitting their role in performing cordon duty or in the removal of the victims from their homes or even transporting the victims to the sites of killing than admitting to participating in the shooting squad, despite the fact that these tasks were directly contributing to the mass murders. For the most part this would have been to avoid prosecution by admitting to performing the actual shooting. However, this may also reflect a mind-set at the time where many policemen felt more comfortable, and less responsible, performing roles other than actually shooting.

Related to these concerns are the tasks of the officer ranks to justify the actions of the battalion during this period. The speeches by Deckert and possibly also Nickel and Jeckeln to a gathered battalion appear to have at least strongly indicated to the men their upcoming tasks, but it is not clear how explicit these speeches were. A former member of the battalion staff remembered the term “resettlement” from that time, although he claimed he didn’t know that it meant killing.¹²³ Similarly, a former 2nd Company member recalled that in Gaisin, “we were only told that the Jewish inhabitants were going to be resettled. Here for the first time it became clear what the word resettlement actually meant”.¹²⁴ Terms like “resettlement” and also “cleansing” were probably used by the higher ranks at the time, but if the policemen really did not know what they actually meant at first, it cannot have taken long to realise. The *Aktionen* performed by the battalion may well have been linked to a “security” rationale. The fact that the battalion was carrying out these massacres along the route of what would become the main German transport and supplies route suggests that the massacres may have been couched in these terms. With a few of the cases the main massacre was preceded by a real or imagined link to an armed enemy. The massacre in Starokonstantinov was preceded by the capture and shooting of parachutists in the area. In Gaisin Jews of the town were blamed for killing wounded German soldiers. A number of supposed communists and a commissar

¹²³ StA 120 Js, statement by Klarner, 1977, p.1192.

¹²⁴ StA 120 Js, statement by Häschke, 1980, p.1342. Häschke claimed that he only heard about the massacre.

were captured in the Kirovohrad area and a number of “Soviet functionaries” were captured near Znamienka just before the massacre there. However, contrary to the earlier massacres carried out by Battalion 314 in July and August against primarily younger Jewish men, in Ukraine Battalion 304 from the start was carrying out massacres of entire Jewish communities, therefore “security” rationales that targeted Jewish civilians as partisans, potential partisans or partisan helpers may not have been considered as sufficient. It appears to be more likely that for the mass murders of whole populations that included many individuals who quite obviously were not physically capable of providing any real threat, security rationales were married, in line with the Nazi worldview, with millennial rationales such as those mentioned quite clearly by Deckert in his letter that targeted the Jews as a whole.

Immediately before the involvement of Battalion 304 in a series of mass murders along the stretch of roads that would become the DG IV, there was an influx of SS personnel into the officer ranks. Deckert was chosen specifically for the task by Himmler or perhaps Jeckeln. From the witness statements it appears that Deckert was associated by the men with these new tasks, but remained largely aloof and appeared to have little personal contact with the rank and file of the battalion. Part of Dr Busse’s job was to instruct the men on how to kill efficiently, although Schumann, one of about 15 other members of Battalion 304 to have attended the practical killing course in Cracow in January 1941, also took a lead role in demonstrating killing techniques. Additionally, three newly created SS lieutenants, Lochbrunner, Seeber and Becker, appear to have all arrived to the battalion together and filled the platoon leader positions. These men would have had much more personal contact with the men under their command and are likely to have played a significant role in projecting ideological justifications for the series of massacres. Along with the company commanders and some NCOs in command positions, it appears that these young men would have played pivotal roles in distributing orders and organising volunteers to their own sub-units. There also appears to have been a strong officer presence at the killing sites. But generally, very little direct evidence emerged from the post-war trials on the actions of these junior officers in preparing and carrying out the massacres.

Police Battalion 314 and the massacre in Dnepropetrovsk

Battalion 314 left Vinnitsa on 14 September 1941, was briefly stationed in Kirovohrad (until relieved by Battalion 304 on 19 September) and arrived in Dnepropetrovsk on 21 September.¹²⁵ Pohl, Lower and Curilla have each stated that Battalion 314 was involved in the massacre of about 15,000 Jews

¹²⁵ StA München I 320 Js 83/74 [hereafter 320 Js], File 1, pp.94 and 194. ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2966. NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 1 to 30.9.41.

carried out in the city of Vinnitsa on 19 and 20 September 1941 along with EK 6 and Reserve Police Battalion 45.¹²⁶ However, a message intercepted by British Intelligence sent on 19 September stated that Police Battalion 314 was on that day stationed at Kirovohrad and was preparing to proceed to Dnepropetrovsk.¹²⁷ Kirovohrad lies approximately 300 km south-east of Vinnitsa, a fair distance to be covered. Martin Dean has found that in the city of Vinnitsa 146 Jews were murdered at the end of July 1941 shortly after the occupation of the town by the Wehrmacht, about 600 Jews were murdered during the first half of September and about 15,000 Jews on 19 and 20 September.¹²⁸ As detailed in the previous chapter, it is known that part of the 3rd Company of Battalion 314 under the leadership of Lieutenant Panis carried out a massacre in Vinnitsa on 12 September, which may well have been the massacre of the 600 Jews in early September that Dean mentions. That the battalion is known to have left Vinnitsa on 14 September and been in Kirovohrad on 19 September and then in Dnepropetrovsk (about 500 km east of Vinnitsa) on 21 September indicates that the battalion, at least as a whole, could not have participated in the large massacre in Vinnitsa on 19 and 20 September. It is possible that one or more sub-units of Battalion 314 participated in the Vinnitsa massacre and then caught up with the main body of the battalion in Dnepropetrovsk at a later date. But it does appear to be the case that the first large-scale massacre of Jewish civilians involving the entire battalion occurred on 13 and 14 October in Dnepropetrovsk where about 15,000 Jews were murdered by the battalion and what appears to be a very small detachment of EK 6. This would be the last large-scale massacre organised under Jeckeln's supervision before his exchange of positions with Prützmann.¹²⁹

In a strikingly similar manner to Battalion 304, the officer ranks of Battalion 314 received an influx of SS officers before the battalion's involvement in the large-scale massacre in Dnepropetrovsk. Four newly-promoted lieutenants arrived at the battalion either in the Kovel area or in Vinnitsa shortly after completing the same officer training course at Berlin-Köpenick. Lieutenant Schellwath became platoon leader in the 1st Company, Lieutenants Schleich and Pütz became platoon leaders in the 2nd Company and Panis, as we have seen, came to the 3rd Company as platoon commander.¹³⁰ In October 1941, Schellwath, Schleich and Panis were all 21 years old and Pütz was only 19. These four young officers were all classmates at Berlin-Köpenick with Lochbrunner, Seeber and Becker of

¹²⁶ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.153. Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.36. Curilla, *Baltikum*, p.796. Kruglov, 'Vinnitsa', in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, states that Battalion 45 shot more than 10,000 Jews on 19 September, p.1577.

¹²⁷ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 1 to 30.9.41.

¹²⁸ Dean, 'German Gendarmerie', p.174.

¹²⁹ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.37. Andreas Schultz, Günter Wegmann, Dieter Zinke (eds.), *Die Generale der Waffen-SS und der Polizei, vol 2* (Bissendorf: Biblio-Verlag, 2005), p.350.

¹³⁰ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Bauer, 1975, p.2465, Strauch, 1975, p.2495, Immand, 1976, p.2518 and Wendorff, 1976, p.2570.

Battalion 304 earlier that year. As with Battalion 304, there was also a change in the battalion commander for 314. British Intelligence intercepted a message from Himmler to PRS dated 13 September 1941 that said “in the interest of the service”, Major Severt is appointed as Commander of Police Battalion 314.¹³¹ One former Battalion member recalled that Severt introduced himself to the NCOs in Dnepropetrovsk and another that Jahnhorst left after Severt’s arrival.¹³² Jahnhorst left the battalion on 6 October in Dnepropetrovsk, so Severt would have arrived in late-September or early-October. Jahnhorst, the 1st Company commander, who had been ill while stationed in Luboml and who later claimed to have left the battalion as he did not agree with the massacres, was replaced by Christ, the former commander of 1st Company before he became part of the PRS staff.¹³³ A former member of the 1st Company in Poland recalled hearing that Jahnhorst’s departure was because he did not “get on well” with the officer ranks in the battalion.¹³⁴ One further change in the command structure for the *Aktion* in Dnepropetrovsk concerned the 2nd Company leadership. Wendorff, the 2nd Company commander, claimed after the war that he reported sick to Major Severt before the start of the *Aktion* with advanced periodontitis. During the post-war trials, Bauer confirmed Wendorff’s illness around that time (as does Wendorff’s police personnel file) and no witnesses, including Bauer, could remember seeing or speaking to Wendorff during the executions.¹³⁵ It appears then, that because of Wendorff’s absence Bauer as his deputy was in command of the 2nd Company for the duration of the massacre. Therefore, at the start of the massacre in Dnepropetrovsk, of the 14 command positions that included: the battalion commander, his adjutant, the three company leaders and nine platoon leader positions (excluding the half-platoons in each company), ten were filled with SS officers; eight of whom were graduates of Berlin-Köpenick.

¹³¹ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report, September 1941.

¹³² ZStL B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1641.

¹³³ Christ claimed that he was not with Battalion 314 in Dnepropetrovsk, which appears to have been accepted during separate post-war proceedings against former battalion members, including a high profile trial against Christ himself in the late-1960s. This is despite the fact that a number of witnesses placed Christ at Dnepropetrovsk, including: five former policemen who all remembered Christ shooting wildly into a crowd of Jews at Dnepropetrovsk; Probst, a former member of the 1st Company who in two statements given seven years apart was “one hundred percent certain” that Christ replaced Jahnhorst in Dnepropetrovsk and Wendorff who was “completely certain” that Christ was with the battalion in Dnepropetrovsk. It does not appear that Probst or Wendorff received any personal advantage as far as avoiding prosecution was concerned by claiming that Christ was present as company commander in Dnepropetrovsk. Christ was the Police Commissioner of Wiesbaden at the time of his trial starting in 1966. ZStL B162/6693, statement by Christ, 1973, p.1869, B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.58, ZStL B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1650, ZStL B162/6695, statement by Wendorff, 1976, p.2570.

¹³⁴ ZStL B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1641.

¹³⁵ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.2990-2. Wendorff claimed that he had five teeth removed on the first day of the massacre in Dnepropetrovsk.

According to the diary of a former 1st Company member, the rounding-up of the Jewish victims was started by the battalion on 10 October and the battalion received their “marching orders” on 12 October.¹³⁶ From the results of the post-war trials, it appears that after collecting the victims from Dnepropetrovsk and interning them in a department store, the battalion was ready to march out of the city but at the last minute received orders to return to the accommodations.¹³⁷ The original orders issued by Jeckeln were that Battalion 314 were to leave after the collection, so were not initially supposed to be involved in the massacre that followed. However, an order by Jeckeln or another higher SS or SD officer ordered the battalion back with instructions to carry out the “liquidations” immediately. It is not clear whether the Jews were originally gathered in the department store for another unit to come and carry out a massacre or for any other reason. It appears that the Wehrmacht (FK 240) in Dnepropetrovsk had made preparations for the establishment of a ghetto, but the rapid, and apparently unexpected, massacre made these preparations unnecessary.¹³⁸ Major Severt is supposed to have followed these orders reluctantly.¹³⁹ The West German courts were persuaded that an “SD” unit, probably EK 6, was present at the massacre and may have communicated the orders to Severt. Enough former policemen could not remember seeing any SD men during the massacre to suggest that it was a small detachment and probably played an organisational role.¹⁴⁰ On 12 October, the same day as the cancelled march, an officers’ meeting was called during which the organisation of the forthcoming massacre was discussed.¹⁴¹ It appears that Major Severt was at the meeting, but that his adjutant Lieutenant Steinmann took the lead. Hertel claimed that he received his orders for the massacre from Steinmann.¹⁴² Bauer stated that although Severt was (in Bauer’s opinion) stricter than Dressler had been, he was not as decisive and left the “uncomfortable matters” to Lieutenant Steinmann.¹⁴³

Following the meeting specific orders were passed on to the platoon leaders who were not at the meeting by the company officers and relayed to the rank and file by the platoon leaders.¹⁴⁴ The division of tasks for the carrying out of the massacre in Dnepropetrovsk do not appear to have been as clearly delineated as with the massacres carried out by Battalion 304. The 1st Company was given

¹³⁶ *JuNS XLV*, p.343.

¹³⁷ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2970. Six witnesses attested to this.

¹³⁸ ‘Nikolaev and Dnepropetrovsk Regions’, in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and ghettos*, p.1615.

¹³⁹ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.203.

¹⁴⁰ *JuNS XLV*, p.365. Four former policemen stated they didn’t see any SD in Dnepropetrovsk. These witnesses included Probst and Balek who appear to have been much more forthcoming as witnesses than the average former battalion members.

¹⁴¹ ZStL B 162/6694, p.1816. ZStL B 162/6697, p.3000. 320 Js, File 2, p.201-2.

¹⁴² *JuNS XLV*, p.345.

¹⁴³ *JuNS XLV*, p.371.

¹⁴⁴ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.201. ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.59.

the orders to guard the department store, cordon off the area and transport the victims on foot and by truck to a collection point near the ravine where the victims were shot. The 2nd Company was given the task to guard the execution site and drive the victims from the department store to the collection point. While they were being guarded at the collection point by the 2nd Company, the victims were forced to hand over their valuables. All three companies appear to have been given the task of taking the victims from the collection point to the execution site.¹⁴⁵ Unlike the massacres carried out by Battalion 304 there is considerable overlap between the tasks of the three companies. This may have been organised deliberately by the battalion leadership in such a way to spread out the responsibilities for the overall *Aktion* amongst the battalion's sub-units.

The shooting appears to have been done by an SD unit of 4-20 men and volunteers from across the three companies of Battalion 314.¹⁴⁶ A former battalion member recalled an SD man announcing "the policemen may also participate".¹⁴⁷ It appears then that the "SD unit" may have initiated the shooting, but were gradually relieved by volunteers from Battalion 314. As with Battalion 304, there appears to have been a strong officer presence at the execution site. A former member of the 1st Company remembered seeing Severt and Christ (probably 1st Company commander at this time) at the execution site, although he didn't see them taking part in the shooting.¹⁴⁸ Bauer claimed that Hertel (also 1st Company) was at the execution site during the time when the 1st Company was shooting. Bauer was also at the execution site, presumably when members of the 2nd Company were involved in the shooting.¹⁴⁹ Probst of the 1st Company remembered Platoon Commander and Reserve Sergeant Edelmüller (presumably also of 1st Company) leading the shooting squad which was made up from his platoon.¹⁵⁰ All this suggests that the shooting was done by platoons, made up of volunteers and lead by the platoon and company leaders. Due to the extraordinarily large number of victims on this occasion, it would seem likely that the companies rotated shooting duty.

The weather conditions at Dnepropetrovsk during the massacre only added to the horror imposed on the victims by the German units carrying out the massacre. During the first day the rain had turned some areas extremely muddy leaving many victims standing "knee deep in mud" at the collection point before being dragged to the ravine by the policemen.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, the

¹⁴⁵ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.2976-8. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.201-4. 320 Js, File 1, p.59.

¹⁴⁶ *JuNS XLV*, p.365. ZStL B162/6695, statement by Schall, 1975, p.2470. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.204.

¹⁴⁷ *JuNS XLV*, p.365.

¹⁴⁸ ZStL B 162/6649, p.59.

¹⁴⁹ *JuNS XLV*, p.365. StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.202.

¹⁵⁰ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.59. ZStL B162/6692, 1971, p.1649.

¹⁵¹ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Blumhofer, 1976, p.2572, "Everything was grey". StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.205.

perpetrators were unable to murder all the victims on the first day of the shooting (13 October), so the shooting was halted at nightfall. The battalion leadership hadn't considered it necessary to transport the remaining victims back to the city, but instead left them overnight in an open field completely unprotected and exposed to the weather and guarded by the 2nd Company under Bauer. In the evening the rain had turned into snow and many of the victims froze to death in the field overnight. Those that tried to escape were shot at by members of the 2nd Company. The next day the policemen found many bodies frozen in the mud. Among those that had survived the night many had their feet frozen into the mud and had to be forcibly removed by policemen in order to be taken to the ravine to be murdered there.¹⁵²

Little information emerged from the post-war trials on the role played by Battalion Commander Severt at Dnepropetrovsk. No witnesses portrayed Severt as an enthusiastic participant in the mass murder of Jews and post-war evidence emerged that suggests Severt was actually reluctant to return to Dnepropetrovsk on 12 October for his battalion to carry out the murder of the Jews imprisoned in the department store.¹⁵³ It may also have been the case, as Bauer claimed, that Severt was personally "uncomfortable" with such matters and left much of the organisation to his adjutant, Steinmann. However, Severt must have known why the Jews of the city were being rounded up and imprisoned, so even if he was "uncomfortable" leading the massacre of thousands of Jewish civilians, he didn't necessarily disagree fundamentally with the course of action and, as battalion commander, could delegate practical roles to his subordinate officers. Furthermore, if Severt really had a pronounced aversion to such actions, it is hard to see why he was chosen to replace Dressler at that particular time as battalion commander. A former member of the 1st Company stated that he saw Severt or Christ at the execution site ordering a policeman to check if a man claiming not to be Jewish was circumcised.¹⁵⁴ Acting as 1st Company commander or in another senior role, five witnesses (all former battalion members) claimed that they saw Christ firing randomly into gathered Jews at Dnepropetrovsk with his pistol, killing several. Christ appears to have been screaming about the Jews being responsible for the death of his brother.¹⁵⁵ This sort of extreme behaviour does not appear to have been out of character for the 1st Company commander. At an unknown time and location, Christ is said to have shot several "Russian" farmers on their way to the fields without any

¹⁵² StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.202-6.

¹⁵³ *JuNS* XLV, p.371.

¹⁵⁴ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.59. Another witness claimed to have seen Severt at the execution site, but provided such contradictory evidence that the courts had to dismiss his statements. *JuNS* XLV, p.371.

¹⁵⁵ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Christ, 1973, p.1869.

provocation; an act Christ justified by labelling the farmers partisans.¹⁵⁶ Further examples of Christ's murderous actions will be discussed in the following chapter.

Both Bauer and Hertel appear to have been very active during the massacre. Bauer, acting as 2nd Company commander in the place of Wendorff, gave instructions at the department store, collection point, at cordon posts and at the execution site. Bauer assumed a role that saw him back and forth between all posts assigned to the 2nd Company including at the execution site when his subordinates were active there.¹⁵⁷ More than thirty years after the event, for the benefit of the trial proceedings Bauer sketched a detailed overview of the whole *Aktion* which showed he was very well acquainted with what went on.¹⁵⁸ Hertel, acting either as platoon or company commander also seems to have covered a lot of ground during the massacre. Hertel commanded his men at the department store, organised the cordoning duties of the 1st Company and was present at the execution site when men of the 1st Company were carrying out the shooting.¹⁵⁹ Crucially, one former member of the 1st Company, who appears to be referring to the events in Dnepropetrovsk, recalled Hertel giving "lessons" to the 1st Company explaining the "Jewish actions" to alleviate any scepticism among the men.¹⁶⁰ When these "lessons" were carried out and their precise content are not known. However, this is a clear example of the role played by the junior officers in justifying the actions performed by the battalion for the men under their command by "educating" them in the necessity of the tasks.

Immediately following Dnepropetrovsk, Battalion 314, along with the rest of PRS, appear to have been involved in "cleansing actions" around the Perijasslavel and Khozki areas on the river Dnepr that were tracked by British Intelligence. PRS led by Jeckeln appear to have been involved in anti-partisan activities in October and November that involved frequent executions.¹⁶¹ A message from Jeckeln to Himmler among others on 30 October stated that Battalion 314 was deployed in the Khozki area and that the local residents were being blamed for supplying partisans with weapons.¹⁶² On 16 November the HSSPF Staff Company reported under the heading "Aktion nach Kriegsbrauch": "Police Battalion 314, cleansing operations in Komarovka area completed".¹⁶³ These reports indicate that Battalion 314 was involved in an unknown number of massacres which appear to have been couched as part of a "security" sweep of the area, no details of which were captured by British

¹⁵⁶ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.185.

¹⁵⁷ StA 320 Js, File 2, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.202.

¹⁵⁸ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2996.

¹⁵⁹ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, pp.2997-9.

¹⁶⁰ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, statement by Quass, 1978, p.3001.

¹⁶¹ NA HW 16/6, GCCS reports for the period 1.10 to 14.11 and 15.11 to 14.12.41. NA HW 16/63, GCCS summary report 'The German Police', p.23.

¹⁶² NA HW 16/45, GCCS report, 30.10.41.

¹⁶³ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report, 16.11.41.

Intelligence.¹⁶⁴ Following the completion of the operation, the battalions of PRS travelled further east with Battalion 314 headed for Kharkov where it would be stationed over the winter. According to British Intelligence during late November and early December 1941 “the covering phrase *Aktion nach Kriegsbrauch* occurs in every situation report”.¹⁶⁵

Both Battalions 304 and 314 received an injection of SS officers prior to the involvement of the battalions in large-scale massacres from September 1941. Unlike the smaller scale massacres of July and August carried out by sub-units of Battalion 314, the junior officers were neither the authors of the massacres nor were in overall command positions. However, the roles of these officers in enabling the battalions as whole units to carry out the larger massacres were far from negligible. We can see that with both battalions efforts were made to spread the responsibility for the massacres as broadly as possible amongst the companies. Battalion 304 rotated the main tasks of each company with every massacre and Battalion 314 appears to have rotated the tasks of the companies within the same massacre at Dnepropetrovsk. In addition to communicating higher orders to the lower ranks and dividing specific tasks down through the platoon and group leaders, one of the tasks of the company and platoon commanders would have been to ensure that there were enough policemen under their command willing to perform the assigned task; this appears to have been particularly important with shooting assignments. A premium seems to have been placed on the organisation and smooth running of the murder operations in order to reduce unnecessary strain on the perpetrators; assigning men to tasks that they were perhaps unwilling or unable to perform efficiently would not be conducive to these ends. Both battalions appear to have encouraged volunteers for the shooting and, as is especially evident with Battalion 304, a number of “eager” participants appear to have come to the fore. Again, over time the officers, as well as NCOs acting as platoon and group commanders, would come to know these individuals and be able to draw on them when needed. The case of 314 at Dnepropetrovsk shows a number of individual junior officers playing major roles during the massacre. Lieutenant Steinmann appears to have taken over some of the main organisational tasks; Christ showed himself to be an extremely violent individual by shooting randomly at groups of Jews and Hertel and Bauer, both possibly acting as company commanders at this particular massacre, covered a lot of ground in supervising the contributions of their men to the massacre in a number of different tasks. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, Hertel appears to have led “educational” lessons offering justifications for the mass murder of thousands of civilians carried out by him and his men. That the junior officers were trained in part to perform “educational” roles within their battalions at Berlin-Köpenick suggests it is fair to assume that the

¹⁶⁴ NA HW 16/45, GCCS reports, October to December 1941.

¹⁶⁵ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 15.11 to 14.12.41.

other graduates that filled many of the company and platoon commander positions in Battalions 304 and 314 performed similar roles in rationalising and justifying mass murder to their men before or after the fact through educational lessons.

Chapter 6. 1942 and 1943

This chapter will focus mainly on the actions and experiences of the policemen outside of the immediate participation in large-scale killing and how these experiences influenced their continued participation in carrying out policies geared towards mass murder. Over the winter of 1941-42 both Battalions 314 and 304 would be stationary for a period of time that allows a closer look at the interactions between the policemen and the local populations and the moral code that guided their thoughts and actions during this period and the times when the battalions were carrying out the massacres of Jewish civilians. Some evidence emerged during the post-war trials regarding this period that allow an examination of the behaviour of one individual in particular and a discussion of how Nazi and SS codes of behaviour influenced the actions of the policemen. During 1942 and 1943 both battalions were involved in a variety of activities for the benefit of the Nazi imperial project generally and the more immediate needs of the German war effort which were performed largely in sub-units under the command of junior officers. This chapter will examine the influence of the officers on the behaviour of their men in carrying out these tasks.

Winter Hardships

Both Battalions 314 and 304 would be for the most part stationary over the winter of 1941/42. Battalion 304 would spend the winter in Kiev where it arrived on 19 October and Battalion 314 was stationed in Kharkov from 5 December.¹ By December 1941 conditions such as the extreme cold, a shortage of suitable winter clothing, lack of food, fuel and ammunition as well as the breakdown of equipment due to the extreme conditions, were having an influence on the ability of the German army to wage war and a negative effect on the discipline of the troops. According to Stephen G. Fritz, around Christmas 1941 the number of German troops freezing to death on the Eastern Front exceeded the number of replacements.² The difficult weather conditions appear also to have had an effect on the units behind the front, including Battalions 314 and 304. From late autumn British Intelligence reports on the intercepted German messages show some of the difficulties experienced by the German units in the east. The main problems appear to have been related to transport issues caused by the mud and then snow and ice. The transport system, particularly the roads, appears to have been completely overstrained with heavy delays, standstills and frequent calls for tractors to aid broken down vehicles. There were also problems with the railways. In the south, those taking

¹ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1592. ZStL B162/6651, Tagebuch Balek, p.587.

² Stephen G. Fritz, *Ostkrieg. Hitler's War of Extermination in the East* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), pp.203-8.

leave could hope for a good service from Lemberg to Germany, but it appears that there were problems getting to and from Lemberg from central Ukraine.³ In November 1941, Captain Meisel and others that were returning from leave appear to have had problems returning to Battalion 314 then stationed in Pereyaslav.⁴

Aside from presenting difficult travelling conditions (Battalion 304 were travelling mostly by bicycle), the transport problems meant that the policemen did not receive frequent post; Police Regiment South (PRS) reported that some units had been eight weeks without letters.⁵ Like the front soldiers the police battalions in the east were also forced to cope with a severe lack of winter clothing which appears to have been a constant subject in the communications intercepted by British Intelligence. "The authorities refer applicants to an order of General Daluege regarding the issue of winter clothing (possibly quite an inadequate order), or to some other authorities. Or they admit that the things are not to be had...The clothing and underwear of Police Battalion 309 are deficient, and the general health only 'moderate'". A later message shows that by mid-December, clothing had been made available for Battalions 304 and 315 in Lemberg, but the problem of transporting the clothing to the units remained; "units are called upon to make their own arrangements for collection".⁶ The decrease in the number of massacres committed by the SS and police units in winter 1941-42 appears to have been in part because the weather conditions hindered the mobility of these units. This is particularly evident in the case of Battalion 304, a unit that was only partly motorised to begin with, which had to stop its consistent run of large massacres along the DG IV in October 1941.

The Soviet counteroffensive which began on the night of 5-6 December came at a time when the German units were hopelessly overextended across a very broad front, when the soldiers were mentally and physically exhausted and with low supplies, inadequate winter equipment and hardly functioning, vulnerable supply lines. During the early months of 1942 the sustained Soviet offensive which resulted in significant German losses, meant that few units were left for mobile operations in the rear areas. The SS-police units, including Battalions 304 and 314, were needed to fill in gaps at the front.⁷ From March until May 1942 units from Battalion 314 (now the 3rd Battalion, Police Regiment 10 – later SS-Police Regiment 10) was deployed at the front. It appears that Battalion 314 was not deployed at the front as a whole unit, but that sub-units were used to bolster other front units. For example, 1st Lieutenant Christ, then 1st Company commander, was serving in March 1942

³ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 1.10 to 14.11.41.

⁴ NA HW 16/45, GCCS report containing intercepted messages from Police Battalion 314 dated 15 and 20.11.41.

⁵ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 1.10 to 14.11.41.

⁶ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 15.11 to 14.12.41.

⁷ NA HW 16/63, GCCS summary report 'The German Police', p.25.

under the 11th SS-*Standarte "Planetta"*; it is not clear whether the rest of the 1st Company was as well.⁸ From April to June 1942 Battalion 304 was deployed at the front near Taganrog. During this period the battalion was renamed as 1st Battalion of Police Regiment 11, soon afterward renamed the SS-Police Regiment 11 and units of the battalion wore the uniforms of the SS-*Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler"* (LSAH).⁹

According to Westermann, the police battalions that were used at the front won praise for their combat prowess, justifying the extensive military training they had been receiving since 1940, but that some units had suffered so many casualties that these battalions required wholesale replacement in spring 1942.¹⁰ The Soviet offensive had ground to a halt by February 1942, so it appears that Battalions 314 and 304 missed much of the hardest fighting.¹¹ Neither battalion therefore required wholesale replacement, but, judging by the officer ranks, there were a number of casualties. In Battalion 304, Lieutenant Seeber was killed and Lieutenant Streubel wounded on 26 May 1942.¹² For Battalion 314, Lieutenant Pütz was killed in March and Wendorff's replacement as 2nd Company commander, Captain Götz died of his wounds in May 1942.¹³ A couple of post-war testimonies from former policemen suggest that, at least in the eyes of some of their subordinates, not all of the junior officers in Battalion 314 were as effective leading from the front as they had been during the massacres committed by the battalion in 1941. According to one testimony Lieutenant Panis, the 3rd Company platoon leader who appears to have led a massacre of Jewish civilians in Vinnitsa, "failed at the front" because he was scared.¹⁴ Oskar Christ received a badge for being shot in the upper thigh while in action east of Kharkov in March 1942, but a former 1st Company member testified that he had been told by other policemen that Christ had inflicted the wound on himself.¹⁵

Battalions 314 and 304 then, appear to have experienced some of the physical and mental hardships during the winter of 1941-42 as well as brutal front-line combat that Bartov and Westermann have argued "greatly enhanced the brutalisation of the troops" (in Westermann's case, Police Battalion 310) that made them more willing to implement Nazi racial policies on the ground.¹⁶ This may indeed have been the case for some in Battalions 304 and 314. However, as has been shown, all the

⁸ BAB SSO 128, SS personnel file Christ. ZStL B162/6690, statement by Hestermann, 1947, p.1276. Hestermann stated that by mid-May 1942, the battalion was deployed in the rear areas south of Kharkov.

⁹ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1592. StA 120 Js, Final Report, 1974, p.680.

¹⁰ Westermann, *Police Battalions*, p.186.

¹¹ Fritz, *Ostkrieg*, p.212.

¹² BAB R19 1205, HA Orpo file Seeber. Letter dated 28 April 1943. BAB SSO 166B, SS personnel file Streubel.

¹³ ZStL B162/6649, list of former officers and NCOs of Police Battalion 314, 1966, pp.184-8.

¹⁴ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Füßel, 1975, p.2427.

¹⁵ BAB SSO 128, SS personnel file Christ. ZStL B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1643.

¹⁶ Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, p.28. Westermann, 'Ideological Soldiers?' pp.62-3.

sub-units from both battalions proved themselves more than capable of carrying out mass murder for an extended period before the harsh winter weather conditions in Ukraine and certainly well before experiencing combat action and casualties.

The massacre in Kharkov by Battalion 314

Approximately 12,000 Jews were killed in Kharkov by Battalion 314 and units of SK 4a over the winter of 1941-42.¹⁷ While stationed in Kharkov the three companies of Battalion 314 rotated the duties of guarding important objects and buildings, training for the front and guard duty for the recently established ghetto for the Jewish population.¹⁸ On 5 December 1941, the same day as the arrival of Battalion 314 in Kharkov, the municipal administration passed a resolution that the city's population were to be registered starting the following day; Jews were to be registered on separate lists from the rest of the population.¹⁹ It seems likely given the timing of the resolution and the arrival of Battalion 314 into the city, as well as the nature of the task itself, that the battalion played a role in the registrations. On 14 December a decree was issued that all the registered Jews had to move to the barracks located on the grounds of a tractor factory and that anyone found in the city after 16 December would be shot. On 17 December the barracks were surrounded by guard units from Battalion 314;²⁰ no provision for food was made and sanitation was extremely poor. According to a survivor, in one part over 70 people were crammed into an area fit for only 6-8 people in normal circumstances and 20-30 people were dying each day from hunger.²¹ A report from Battalion 314 states that the companies of the battalion formed the guard units of the ghetto from 17 December 1941 to 7 January 1942.²²

During this period many policemen acting as guards engaged in the robbery of the Jewish population and in random murder prior to the start of the mass executions from 7 January 1942. Some guards accepted bribes for people to go to the market or to fetch water.²³ According to a survivor, S. S. Krivoruchko, the Germans (meaning also Battalion 314) engaged in not only random, unorganised thievery by breaking into apartments and taking whatever they wanted, but also organised pillaging. "Usually, the Germans would burst into the room on the pretext of searching for weapons and would steal anything that came to mind. In the event of any resistance, they dragged people out into

¹⁷ Kruglov and Dean, 'Khar'kov', in Megargee, Dean and Hecker (eds.), *Camps and Ghettos*, p.1769.

¹⁸ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, p.2057. ZStL B162/6693, statement by Christ, 1973, p.1864.

¹⁹ Kruglov and Dean, 'Khar'kov', p.1767.

²⁰ 'The recollections of the engineer S. S. Krivoruchko', in Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman (eds.), *The Unknown Black Book. The Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp.99-103.

²¹ 'Krivoruchko', p.100.

²² Kruglov and Dean, 'Khar'kov', p.1769.

²³ Kruglov and Dean, 'Khar'kov', p.1769.

the yard and shot them.”²⁴ Nina Mogilevskaya, another survivor from Kharkov also recalled: “The doors [to the barracks] opened when the Germans, on the pretext of searching for weapons, came to steal. They took everything: valuables, clothes, food”.²⁵ Although it seems reasonable to assume that many of the policemen were lining their own pockets, it does appear that the policemen may also have pooled the stolen food and property. A former battalion member recalled carrying out “searches for weapons” (without success) in connection with a guarded area in which fuel, food, clothing and other things were stored by the policemen which presumably contained stolen goods.²⁶ Krivoruchko recalled instances of organised thievery carried out by the German guard units. For the purpose of extracting goods and materials from the Jews, a Jewish elder was designated by the Germans to collect “taxes” imposed on the population; exactions that increased with each demand.²⁷

The day before Christmas and New Year’s, they demanded that we gather supplies to organise parties for the people who were guarding us and money to buy vodka. Ragged, half-starved people tore the last lumps of sugar or fat out of their children’s hands and gave them to the bandits to arrange parties. That was still not enough. The Nazi scoundrels demanded that we give them watches and valuables. These demands were met, backed up as they were by the threat of shooting.²⁸

Krivoruchko also recalled witnessing 15-20 murders every day for trumped up offences.²⁹ A report from Battalion 314 mentioned that the 1st Company while on guard duty shot “Jews trying to leave the ghetto who did not stop when called”.³⁰ As with the massacres carried out by Battalions 314 and 304 in 1941, the murder of Jewish civilians in Kharkov appears to have gone hand in hand with the robbing of the victims. On 24 January 1942 the 1st Company commander, Oskar Christ, signed for the receipt of 83 Dollars and 850 Swedish Crowns.³¹ A large execution appears to have been carried out by Battalion 314 in Kharkov on 23 January, so this money was probably a result of the forced collections of 1st Company during the massacre. Christ appears to have been at the forefront of the killings during the massacre in Dnepropetrovsk and, as will be shown, in Kharkov. It does not seem unlikely that Christ’s men felt constricted in any way regarding the murder of Jewish civilians while on guard duty. During his time as an officer in Battalion 314, Christ certainly seems to have been at the centre of the murderous activities and the sometimes related thefts. A former 1st Company

²⁴ ‘Krivoruchko’, p.101.

²⁵ ‘The recollection of Nina Mogilevskaya, wife of a welder’, *Unknown Black Book*, p.106.

²⁶ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Hestermann, 1947, p.1251. Hestermann did not explicitly state that the searches were conducted amongst the Jews held in the barracks, but referred to “citizens” of Kharkov.

²⁷ ‘Krivoruchko’, pp.100.

²⁸ ‘Krivoruchko’, pp.101.

²⁹ ‘Krivoruchko’, pp.101.

³⁰ Kruglov and Dean, ‘Khar’kov’, p.1769.

³¹ Kruglov and Dean, ‘Khar’kov’, p.1770 (note 15).

member recalled that following the wounding of a policeman in December 1941, Christ requested permission from Major Severth for the shooting of 100 hostages, but Severth only gave permission for the shooting of five people.³² It is not clear whether these hostages were to have been taken solely from the Jewish population of Kharkov or how serious the policeman's injuries were. It is clear however that the incident was made to serve as another excuse to carry out executions. Christ's readiness to use mass violence is clear. Significantly, provided the recollections of the former 1st Company policeman were reasonably accurate - and it should be noted that this description does not appear to be out of sorts as far as descriptions of Christ's readiness for extreme violent behaviour are concerned - this incident demonstrates that the commanding officer could, and at times had to, curb enthusiasm for killing from their subordinates. Had Christ been the commanding officer on the spot, 100 hostages would have been executed. The guards under Christ's command were not likely to have felt significantly retrained from using violence against Jews.

On 5 January 1942 Korsemann took over the position of HSSPF Russia South from Prützmann. Soon afterwards units from SK 4a and Battalion 314 began the killing of the Jews held in the barracks of the tractor factory.³³ Unlike the massacres carried out in 1941, the mass murders in Kharkov appear to have been spread out over a period of weeks. It is known that Battalion 314 carried out massacres on 18 and 23 January while stationed in Kharkov.³⁴ One of the reasons for the extended period appears to be because of repeated Soviet air raids.³⁵ During the executions on 23 January Christ was reportedly picked up by "SD men" on the morning of the execution and stayed at the edge of the ravine with the SD during the execution.³⁶ A former member of the communications platoon of Battalion 314 remembered Lieutenant Pilz "standing out especially" through his participation in the shooting on 23 January.³⁷ During the liquidation of the ghetto in Kharkov, one or more gas vans were used to kill several hundred of the victims.³⁸ A number of former members of Battalion 314 remembered "hearing" about the use of gas vans in Kharkov, or being told initially that the Jews

³² ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.60.

³³ Pohl, 'Ukraine', pp.36-7.

³⁴ ZStL B162/6651, messages from HSSPF Russia South, p.590. A report from Korsemann dated 18 January 1941 stated: *Bataillon 314 Aktion nach Kriegsbrauch*. ZStL B162/6693, statement by Bauer, 1973, pp.1819-20. According to Balek's diary for the 1st Company, a mass execution was carried out on 23 January 1942. See also Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.36 and Kruglov and Dean, 'Khar'kov', p.1769.

³⁵ Kruglov and Dean, 'Khar'kov', p.1769. Two former policemen also recalled and recalled "hearing about" air raids taking place during the mass execution on 23 January: StA 320 Js, File 1, statements by Tröster and Riße, p.60.

³⁶ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, p.2057.

³⁷ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Lettner, 1964, p.54. Pilz may have been commander of the Communications Platoon.

³⁸ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.36. Westermannn, *Police Battalions*, p.185.

were being taken for work service in Germany, and only afterwards that they had been gassed in the vans.³⁹

During the post-war trials a former member of the 1st Company remembered his commander Christ rationalising the massacres of Jews. "The Jews were responsible for the death of his brother because we had them to thank for the war. They said in the jargon of those days that the Jews were useless eaters and they had the opinion that violent measures against them were necessary".⁴⁰ According to Pohl, the Wehrmacht concerns about the food supply in Kharkov played a significant role in the decision to liquidate the ghetto at that particular time. "Here [Kharkov] the connection between the Wehrmacht's seizure of food stores, its ideological perception of the food situation, and the decision to murder [Kharkov's] Jews is particularly clear".⁴¹ The representations of the Jews as "useless eaters" by the officers of Battalion 314 as the reason for the liquidation of the Kharkov ghetto differs somewhat from the earlier "partisan" based rationalisations and indicates that by January 1942, the all-consuming nature of the murder of Ukraine's Jews was becoming more evident to the policemen. The shift in rationalisations for mass murder also corresponds with Nazi ideological prerogatives regarding the distribution of food supplies.

Plans for the seizure of considerable food stuffs from former Soviet territories as developed by Herbert Backe of the Reich Ministry for Agriculture over the six months prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union, were expected to result in the death of tens of millions of lives.⁴² A crucial part of these plans was that the "Russian" cities were to be destroyed and their inhabitants starved to death.⁴³ An official economic "handbook" in the shape of the *Grüne Mappe* was issued to Wehrmacht commanders, presumably also commanders of the SS and police, down to divisional level. The *Grüne Mappe* stated that the German troops were to live off the land in order to unburden transport routes and to relieve the food situation in German occupied Western Europe. The supply of important food stuffs, particularly from the "surplus" areas of Ukraine, to the former Soviet central and northern areas, or "deficit" areas, was to be stopped.⁴⁴ These instructions were received in written form at the divisional level in the Wehrmacht and then likely communicated

³⁹ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Lettner, 1964, p.54. B162/6690, statement by Hesterman, 1947, p.1276. B162/6695, statements by Kempkes, 1974, p.2227 and Schall, 1975, p.2474.

⁴⁰ ZStL B162/6693, statement by Quass, 1965, p.1868.

⁴¹ Pohl, 'Ukraine', p.36.

⁴² Alex J. Kay, "'The Purpose of the Russian Campaign is the Decimation of the Slavic Population by Thirty Million'. The Radicalization of German Food Policy in Early 1941', in Alex J. Kay, Jeff Rutherford, David Stahel (eds.), *Nazi Policy on the Eastern Front, 1941. Total War, Genocide, and Radicalization* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), p.101.

⁴³ Kay, 'Decimation', p.111.

⁴⁴ Kay, 'Decimation', p.113.

down the chain of command.⁴⁵ The rationale for the murder of the Jews of Kharkov as “useless eaters” that the former member of the 1st Company of Battalion 314 recalled receiving in Kharkov may have derived from the type of instructions contained in the *Grüne Mappe* as interpreted and communicated on the spot by a platoon or company commander; in this case, Christ.

Kharkov and Kiev

There was famine in Kharkov and Kiev at the time when Battalions 314 and 304 were stationed in the cities. Many thousands of the city’s inhabitants died of starvation under German military occupation; 1,202 during the first half of May 1942 alone.⁴⁶ A former Communist Party official covertly travelled to Kiev in November 1941 and later reported that “Besides Germans and policemen one rarely met a passer-by in the street...Kiev has become a city of beggars”.⁴⁷ Compared to conditions in France, Belgium or Warsaw, occupation duty in the former Soviet cities over the winter period of 1941-42 could be full of privations, such as the extreme winter climate, a lack of heating and drinking water and, as has been discussed above a shortage of winter clothing.⁴⁸ During the post-war trials, a former member of the 1st Company of Battalion 314 when asked about Kharkov claimed he could only remember “hunger, cold and guard duty”.⁴⁹ The conditions for the German policemen in Kiev and Kharkov may not have been as comfortable as they may have wished, but it appears that at least some of the policemen sought to improve their situation by the ruthless expropriation of the local populations. The companies of both battalions were quartered separately and the officers appear to have had their own separate accommodation and facilities.⁵⁰ Despite the extreme privations of the local populations going on around them, there appears to have been enough food and drink to fuel numerous parties and *Kameradschaftsabende*, including a party with “lots of alcohol and music” in the officers’ barracks of the 1st Company, Battalion 314 the night before the Company was involved in the massacre of some of the Jews held in the tractor factory in Kharkov.⁵¹ On Boxing Day 1941, an unemployed teacher in Kiev wrote in her diary: “The Germans are celebrating. They all walk full and content, all have lights in Christmas trees. But we all move about

⁴⁵ Kay, ‘Decimation’, p.114. Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.166.

⁴⁶ Kay, ‘Decimation’, p.116.

⁴⁷ Cited in Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.172.

⁴⁸ On Minsk see, Stephen Lehnstaedt, ‘The Minsk Experience. German Occupiers and Everyday Life in the Capital of Belarus’, in Kay, Rutherford and Stahel (eds.), *Nazi Policy*, p.252.

⁴⁹ ZStL B162/6695, statement by Blumhöfer, 1976, p.2576.

⁵⁰ StA 120 Js, statement by Liethan, 1977, p.1190. According to Liethan, the battalion commander of 304 was living in a small chateau. *JuNS* Vol XXVII, p.141. The officers of the 1st Company, Battalion 314 had their own accommodation in Kharkov. Apparently former training comrades Schellwath and Pütz shared a room.

⁵¹ StA 120 Js, 1977, p.1190. Liethen remembers there being a number of “party evenings” held at the Commander’s chateau in Kiev. *JuNS* Vol XXVII, pp.142-44.

like shadows, there is total famine".⁵² Social events, particularly those revolving around the consumption of alcohol, in the occupied eastern cities appear to have played a role in consolidating an esprit de corps among the German occupiers and anyone found avoiding such events could face consequences ranging from informal exclusion by their comrades to formal reprimands by commanding officers. Exclusive and isolated communities of occupiers appear to have consolidated in the eastern cities exacerbating the strict division of the occupiers and occupied populations into "us and them" based on pre-existing racial conceptions.⁵³

Koslov has examined how the experience of being in the "East" amplified the violent behaviour of the male and female German guards at the Majdanek camp and argues that the experience of an eastern posting provided an immediate social advancement for the occupiers. Germans from relatively modest social backgrounds, such as the majority of policemen in Battalions 314 and 304, were, thanks to their "racial" and cultural distinctions, suddenly advanced to the highest level of the social hierarchy. Acting as colonial masters, "ordinary" Germans occupied positions of absolute power over the local inhabitants regardless of prior social, political or economic standing; a position that afforded a greater freedom or "licence" for behaviour that would have been deemed illegal and/or immoral at home.⁵⁴ In his investigation of the actions of the Wehrmacht in occupied Belarus, Beorn has demonstrated that while stationed in any particular location in the "Wild East", the Wehrmacht "soon became involved in all manner of interactions that far exceeded its military mandate".⁵⁵ We have already seen how members of Battalion 314 exploited the imprisoned Jewish population of Kharkov, probably to a large extent for personal gain. It appears that members of both Battalions 314 and 304 also made use of their elevated status to exploit the local non-Jewish population. On the German occupiers of Minsk, Stephen Lehnstaedt has argued that it was common for the Germans to beat, rape and murder, but so long as "discipline and obedience existed, the authorities did not mind. Violence was so natural that even the use of service weapons within the city limits caused no alarm".⁵⁶ There is no reason to suggest that matters were considerably different in Kharkov and Kiev than in Minsk. The threat or use of violence was used for personal gain. Berkhoff has shown that in Kiev it was common for German, Hungarian and other occupying soldiers to

⁵² Cited in Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.173.

⁵³ Lehnstaedt, 'Minsk Experience', p.250. Lehnstaedt states that alcohol consumption was "hard and constant" in the east at all levels of the German occupation hierarchy, p.254.

⁵⁴ Koslov, "Going East", pp.564-73. See also Beorn, *Marching into Darkness*, p.173. On "License" Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, pp.284-309.

⁵⁵ Beorn, *Marching into Darkness*, p.152. Beorn is referring primarily to the interactions between German soldiers and the local Jewish populations in Belarus.

⁵⁶ Lehnstaedt, 'Minsk Experience', p.252.

frequent the markets paying prices that they themselves deemed suitable or simply confiscating whatever they felt like taking as well as selling food they had collected in other areas.⁵⁷

Sometime during the period when Battalion 314 was in Kharkov, Christ appears to have shot a carpet dealer in order to come into possession of a carpet. Two former 1st Company members claimed that they heard that Christ had shot the man because he felt he was being charged too much for the carpet.⁵⁸ Lehnstaedt has found that for the German occupiers of Minsk, murder was no longer taboo and could be carried out repeatedly.⁵⁹ It does appear that at least some members of the police battalions considered Kharkov and Kiev, and perhaps the “east” generally, to be within a “zone of exception” in which different rules and moral frame of reference applied. Therefore the use of violence, even if it was used purely for personal gain was not considered by many to be out of the ordinary. However, even in a “zone of exception” the SS members at least were still supposed to adhere to certain “moral” principles. During the war Himmler let SS men know that “immoral behaviour” was not going to be tolerated.⁶⁰ One of the offences that was considered to be immoral behaviour was that of “race defilement” and sexual relations with “alien races” was strictly prohibited. Himmler appears to have placed great importance on a code of ethical behaviour within the SS and police. According to André Mineau, SS ethics revolved around particular moral conceptions of “duty, the common good, and virtue”.⁶¹ Duty was to be expressed in obedience to orders. The common or general good refers to the good of the *Volksgemeinschaft* which included ideas of the preservation of “racial substance” by eliminating “declining birth rates, counter-selection and racial mixing”.⁶² Regarding “racial mixing”, SS men were supposed to behave in a disciplined way, in accordance with the aims of the *Volksgemeinschaft* generally and those of the “SS community of kinship” (*Sippengemeinschaft*) in particular.⁶³

The primary purpose of the SS and police courts that Himmler put into place following the war against Poland was to maintain and enforce SS norms of living and behaviour with respect to SS

⁵⁷ Berkhoff, *Harvest*, pp.174-5.

⁵⁸ ZStL B162/6694, Final Report, 1974, pp.2025-27. In 1971 one of the former 1st Company members gave a remarkably detailed account of what he had heard about the shooting. “[The] man gave Christ a carpet to look at. Christ had laid the carpet over one arm and was supposed to have bargained with the man. Suddenly Christ’s pistol went off and the man was dead. Therefore, Christ must have had the pistol ready and prepared in his hand”. ZStL B162/6692, statement by Probst, 1971, p.1651.

⁵⁹ Lehnstaedt, ‘Minsk Experience’, p.256.

⁶⁰ Wolfgang Bialas and Lothar Fritz, ‘Introduction’, in Bialas and Fritz (eds.), *Ideology and Ethics*, p.6.

⁶¹ Mineau, ‘SS Ethics’, p.310.

⁶² Mineau, ‘SS Ethics’, pp.310-14.

⁶³ Regina Mühlhäuser, ‘A Question of Honor: Some Remarks on the Sexual Habits of German Soldiers during World War II’, in Bialas and Fritz (eds.), *Ideology and Ethics*, p.165.

principles on “virtue”, “decency” and “discipline” and adherence to the SS worldview.⁶⁴ In keeping with Himmler’s views of leadership principles for the SS, the judges of the SS courts were not to be tied to established laws, but were given leeway “to apply the best of their knowledge and belief to find the law that best serves the community of the SS”.⁶⁵ The courts, therefore, corresponded to the ethical framework to which the men being tried were supposed to adhere. The SS and police judicial system was intended to take tough action against offences that Himmler had previously sought to eliminate through educational and disciplinary methods, offences such as having sex with the wives of front-line soldiers and those involving the abuse of alcohol, homosexuality and property crime. The courts were also set up to punish those who had sexual contact with “women from ethnically alien populations” in the occupied eastern territories, in accordance with Himmler’s order of 19 April 1939.⁶⁶ According to a number of studies, many from the SS and police and Wehrmacht units stationed in the East ignored this ban and relationships between Germans and local women were common.⁶⁷ In a recent study Regina Mühlhäuser has shown that members of the Wehrmacht and SS took advantage of the food shortages by pursuing sex in exchange for food or consumer goods.⁶⁸ In occupied cities, such as Kharkov and Kiev where there were extreme food shortages, for Ukrainian women, or indeed men, the acquisition of a German “boyfriend” could be the means to avoid death.⁶⁹ Mühlhäuser has found that although “racial defilement” was strictly prohibited, offenders in the occupied eastern territories were hardly ever charged.⁷⁰ As has been shown, members of Battalions 314 were involved in relationships with women from “alien” populations in Poland, which may also have included Jewish women. It is likely that a number of members from Battalions 314 and 304 had relationships in Ukraine, especially in Kiev and Kharkov where the battalions were stationed for longer periods of time, as indeed was the case earlier in Poland. Some offenders were punished, or at least threatened with punishment by the commanding officer, but the vast majority of cases were not. The effectiveness of the SS and police courts on the ground is likely to have depended on the individual officer on the spot.

A former 1st Company member of Battalion 314 claimed that it was generally known by the policemen that the officers in Kharkov “had orgies with women and alcohol to entertain

⁶⁴ Longerich, *Himmler*, pp.486-8. Christopher Theel, ‘The Moral Rigor of Immorality: The Special Criminal Courts of the SS’, in Bialas and Fritz (eds.), *Ideology and Ethics*, p.348.

⁶⁵ Theel, ‘Moral Rigor’, p.348.

⁶⁶ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.486-88. *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, p.142.

⁶⁷ Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.182. Beorn, *Marching into Darkness*, pp.164-73. Mühlhäuser, ‘Question of Honor’, pp.149-74.

⁶⁸ Mühlhäuser, ‘Question of Honor’, p.158.

⁶⁹ Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.182.

⁷⁰ Mühlhäuser, ‘Question of Honor’, p.172.

themselves”.⁷¹ This depiction does not differ greatly from what is known about the activities of German occupiers in eastern cities. However, it is not clear whether the former policemen was referring to the inclusion of local Ukrainian women in these “orgies”. One of the officers who is known to have had a relationship with a Ukrainian woman in Kharkov was 1st Company Commander Christ. Christ had an intimate relationship with a 20 year old dancer from the Kharkov city theatre, a relationship that appears to have been no secret in the 1st Company.⁷² Christ had the woman employed at the officers’ accommodation as a cleaner and had her living there too until a complaint from Schellwath who was living in the same accommodation with Pütz. He would also take her with him to drinking evenings with other officers of Battalion 314.⁷³ It appears that the woman attended the party held on 17 January 1942, the evening before the battalion carried out a massacre of part of the Jewish population in Kharkov, and was dancing with Battalion Commander Severth; much to Christ’s annoyance who smashed a glass against the wall and called Severth an “old pig”.⁷⁴

In 1943 Himmler was advised by his SS judges that a considerable number of SS and police members in the eastern territories were breaking Himmler’s ban on sexual relations with local women and one of the judges had discovered that a unit had taken the view that “relationships and sex [with indigenous women] were permitted as long as there were no consequences”.⁷⁵ Clearly Christ’s relationship was tolerated amongst the officer ranks of the battalion. At some point during the relationship, the woman appears to have told Christ that she was pregnant; something that was also talked about in the company ranks.⁷⁶ Probably for this reason Christ had his “boys” kill the woman in March 1942, shortly after Christ had been wounded at the front.⁷⁷ Lower has found that it was common for German perpetrators to rationalise the murder of women who had been sexually abused as a “precautionary measure” against Soviet espionage.⁷⁸ This appears to have been precisely what Christ did, rationalising the killing of the woman because of “espionage” and theft.⁷⁹ Crucially, Christ does not appear to have suffered any serious repercussions at either the battalion level or with the SS courts for either the relationship or the murder of the woman; a fact that would

⁷¹ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.60.

⁷² *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, pp.141-44. ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.60.

⁷³ *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, pp.141-2. On New Year’s Eve Christ and the woman visited Steinmann and Meisel.

⁷⁴ *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, pp.142-3. It is not clear whether Severth heard Christ’s insult or not, but at this point Severth is supposed to have angrily left the party with his adjutant, Steinmann.

⁷⁵ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.487.

⁷⁶ *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, p.143.

⁷⁷ *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, p.144. ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.60.

⁷⁸ Lower, *Nazi Empire*, p.111.

⁷⁹ *JuNS*, Vol XXVII, pp.141-44. During his trial Christ claimed that Pütz caught the woman listening to a “Russian” transmission on the radio in the officer’s accommodation and that she had stolen toiletries. Pütz had not survived the war.

not have been lost on the rest of the 1st Company.⁸⁰ Just a few months later in August 1942, a former member of the 1st Company who had left Battalion 314 in February of that year was sentenced to five months imprisonment by an SS court for having a relationship with a Polish woman, presumably when the battalion had been stationed in Zamość.⁸¹

It appears that Himmler felt obliged to adopt a somewhat more flexible approach to his ban on sex with local women in the East. In June 1942 he relaxed the ban in the GG: "I recognize the difficulties facing the men of the SS in the Generalgouvernement from a sexual point of view. I do not therefore, object to sex in brothels or with prostitutes subject to medical and police supervision, as neither procreation nor close personal relations are likely to occur as a result."⁸² In 1943 SS judges in the east collectively decided that the ban on sex with indigenous women had to be "urgently" amended as they found that so many men were ignoring it.⁸³ Sexual encounters with local women, consensual or not, contradicted SS ideas on race and endangered military discipline, the key issue appears to have had less to do with SS and policemen having sex with "alien" women, and more the resulting "consequences" of unsupervised sexual relations. If Christ's relationship had been reported to higher levels, he may well have been disciplined in some form. However, it appears that the battalion leadership and his fellow SS officers did not consider the whole affair, including the murder of the woman to be worth reporting to the SS court.

In stark contrast to the events involving Christ stands a situation involving Lieutenant Panis of the 3rd Company who was judged to have not adhered to SS standards of chivalrous behaviour. In August 1941, shortly before joining Battalion 314 in Ukraine, Panis started a relationship with a young German woman in Cologne even though he was engaged to be married to someone else, but then broke off both relationships while in Ukraine. The offended young woman in Cologne claimed in a letter to the local SS-*Standarte* that Panis had got her to sleep with him by promising that he would marry her. In May 1942 while on leave, Panis managed to renew the relationship with the same woman after again promising to marry her and even registered a request to be married with the RuSHA, only to break the engagement off again days later after returning to Ukraine. Panis would eventually marry a different woman in August 1943.⁸⁴ The offended woman and her mother wrote letters to the SS authorities in Cologne requesting that Panis be punished, which he was. An SS-

⁸⁰ Christ was tried for these events in the late 1960s, but again received no severe punishment.

⁸¹ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Probst, 1964, p.57. In 1964 Probst appeared to be keen on highlighting Christ's involvement with the Ukrainian woman in early post war investigations on members of PRS. Probst may at that time still have been angered that he had been punished for the same offence that Christ got away with.

⁸² Longerich, *Himmler*, p.487.

⁸³ Longerich, *Himmler*, p.487.

⁸⁴ BAB VBS 2836040013719, RuSHA 'Fragebogen' form Panis. BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis.

Untersturmführer in Cologne concluded that Panis had lied to the woman in order to have sex with her, gave his word of honour, and furthermore broke it all off in an “unmanly way”. The complaint and the conclusion of the SS officer were forwarded to the SS Main Office in 1943 to be dealt with by the disciplinary courts. In Panis’s defence, Captain Meisel, formerly Panis’s company commander and in 1943 battalion commander, wrote to the SS Main Office testifying to Panis’s excellent performance as an officer in the field and as a good comrade and example to his men. Meisel also added: “Because of his abilities he was assigned to special tasks by the battalion during combat missions, which he performed in an exemplary manner”.⁸⁵

In June 1943 the SS Main Office judiciary in Munich agreed with the conclusions of the SS-Untersturmführer stating that Panis had ill-used his officer’s word of honour (*Offiziersehrenwort*) and that his behaviour had “damaged the reputation of the SS”. Panis was sentenced in August 1943 by an HSSPF to three weeks house arrest which he was to serve at the Oranienburg training school for “Actions unworthy of an SS leader and police officer”. Only Meisel’s character reference and “military evaluation” prevented a stricter punishment.⁸⁶ Clearly Himmler considered the virtue of “decency” to be of prime importance in fostering a vanguard cohort of National Socialists in the SS and remained consistent in extolling his conceptions of key principles and virtues.⁸⁷ In his well-known speech in Posen, Himmler highlighted what he regarded as the basic SS principle: SS men had to be “honest, decent, faithful, and comradely toward people of our own blood and toward nobody else. Our duty is to our Volk”.⁸⁸ Panis, as demonstrated in Vinnitsa and indicated in Meisel’s reference to his important contribution to the “special tasks” of the battalion in his character reference was a vanguard murderer. Nevertheless, he was deemed to have crossed a moral line and violated SS standards of “decency” in his treatment of the young woman from Cologne. In fact were it not for his notable participation in and even leadership of mass murders, he would have received an even tougher punishment. Generally it appears that the SS leadership were willing to be flexible towards crimes such as Christ’s, which does not appear to have been unusual in the eastern territories, yet remained relatively inflexible regarding perceived offences against fellow members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* such as that committed by Panis.

Officers from both battalions also engaged in relationships with German women stationed in Kiev and Kharkov, relationships that would have been deemed more suitable by the SS leadership. Lehnstaedt has argued that in Minsk female secretaries were particularly popular among the male

⁸⁵ BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis. Letter from Meisel dated 11 March 1943.

⁸⁶ BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis. Judgement by SS-Gruppenführer and Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Breithaupt, dated 15 August 1943.

⁸⁷ Mineau, ‘SS Ethics’, p.316.

⁸⁸ Cited in Mineau, ‘SS Ethics’, p.317.

German occupiers.⁸⁹ In August 1942 Streubel, the adjutant for Battalion 314, wrote to the RuSHA requesting permission to marry a young woman he had met in Kiev earlier that year who was working there as a stenographer for EG C.⁹⁰ In July 1943 Hertel of Battalion 314 requested marriage to a woman he had met in “south-east Russia”.⁹¹ The concept of the SS-*Sippengemeinschaft* was intended to form a frame of reference for the SS men and their families; a National Socialist vanguard community within the broader *Volksgemeinschaft* to which they were also supposed to devote their “honesty”, “loyalty” and “decency”. Amy Carney has shown that *Das Schwarze Korps* continually promoted the connection between marriage and family through articles that emphasised the efficiency of an early marriage, with the basic message that “the younger the couple was at the time of marriage, the greater the possibility for raising a family consisting of four or more children”. By linking race and heredity with marriage and family, these articles were promoting the biological worldview that endorsed “purposeful sexuality”; having sex for procreation rather than pleasure.⁹² Six of the junior officers from Battalions 314 and 304 appear to have complied with this ideal and married at a young age. Panis (eventually married in 1943), Hertel and Bauer of Battalion 314 and Streubel, Becker and Lochbrunner of 304 requested to be married in 1942 and 1943.⁹³ The average age of this group in January 1943 was 24 and the average age of their intended spouses was younger than that.

A prerequisite for getting married and producing children lay in the proper choice of spouse according to racial criteria. An SS text published in 1936 included a list of “Ten Commandments” for choosing a partner. “Commandment” number five stated: “As a German, choose only a spouse of the same or of Nordic blood. Racial mixes lead only to degeneration and ruin, but Nordic blood binds the whole Volk together”.⁹⁴ A glance at the process of the individual marriage requests contained in the RuSHA personnel files shows the lengths the officials had to go to in order to ensure that individual SS officers had chosen their intended spouse along SS racial criteria. Lochbrunner, who wanted to speedily marry a Finnish-born Swedish citizen who was resident in Germany at the time felt compelled to add to his application “In terms of Aryan descent there are no concerns regarding my bride”.⁹⁵ The primary intention then was to contribute biologically to strengthening the SS-

⁸⁹ Lehnstaedt, ‘Minsk Experience’, p.247.

⁹⁰ BAB VBS 2836060002238, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Streubel.

⁹¹ BAB R9361-III 74247, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Hertel.

⁹² Amy Carney, ‘Das Schwarze Korps and the Validation of the SS Sippengemeinschaft’, in Bialas and Fritz (eds.), *Ideology and Ethics*, p.331.

⁹³ BAB R9361-III 7414, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Bauer. BAB VBS 283 6035003589, RuSHA ‘Fragebogen’ form Lochbrunner.

⁹⁴ Text entitled ‘*Unser Ziel: Die rassistisch wertvolle, erbgesunde, kinderreiche SS-Sippe*’, cited in Mineau, ‘SS Ethics’, p.319.

⁹⁵ VBS 2836035003589, Lochbrunner.

Sippengemeinschaft and, by extension, the *Volksgemeinschaft* by producing racially valuable offspring, a concept that was taken very seriously by Himmler. Deckert claimed after the war that he had fallen out with Himmler because of his reluctance to reproduce after being married while there was a war on.⁹⁶ The decisions of these men to marry so young are of course likely to have come from a variety of motivations. For example, both Streubel and Lochbrunner submitted their requests to the RuSHA while their future spouses were pregnant, which, again, contrasts dramatically with Christ's treatment of his Ukrainian girlfriend. However, their decisions did conform to the SS ideal of a young vanguard acting in accordance with the aims of the *SS-Sippengemeinschaft*.⁹⁷

The intention on the part of the SS leadership then was that the SS officers, at home as well as in the field, were to adhere to certain virtues and morals. That these men were to remain "decent" whether in regards to their personal lives or while carrying out mass murder appears to have been considered to be very important to Himmler as is evident from his Posen speech in 1943. Welzer has argued that National Socialist morality, being based on the absolute inequality of people, excluded those not belonging to the "master race" from moral obligations and thus preserved a sense of "moral integrity" for the killers.⁹⁸ However, the extent to which the perpetrators on the ground were actually convinced that their actions could be morally justified remains unclear.⁹⁹ SS ethics and morals were intended to govern all aspects of the lives of the SS officers, from the mass killing of unarmed civilians to marriage and procreation. It appears that a significant proportion of the SS officers of Battalions 314 and 304 who were supposed to represent an ideological "vanguard" adhered to these ethics in their personal lives with regards to their marriage record. Some appear to have, at least in part, attempted to adhere to these principles and others decided, in some aspects, not to. These officers were individuals capable of making independent decisions and the behaviour of the individual officer at this level, to an extent, could set the standards and boundaries of acceptable behaviour of his subordinates. As Commander of the 1st Company if Christ was known to have been having a relationship with a Ukrainian woman, it seems likely that his men may have felt more free to do the same without fear of punishment even though the action was forbidden by the SS leadership. If Christ was seen to murder for personal gain, which was also prohibited, again his men may have felt more inclined to do so too. As well as setting boundaries for behaviour, clearly the need morally to justify the actions of the perpetrators was also deemed important. Matthäus has argued that as long as "certain legitimising methods" were applied, it mattered little to the

⁹⁶ StA 120 Js, summary of Deckert, 1981, pp.1482-3.

⁹⁷ VBS 2836060002238, Streubel. VBS 2836035003589, Lochbunner.

⁹⁸ Welzer, 'Moral Code' and 'Killing and Morality'.

⁹⁹ Bialas and Fritz, 'Introduction', p.2.

perpetrators on the ground what was actually done.¹⁰⁰ The SS leadership may have provided the general ideological and moral framework for those who were to carry out Nazi policies, but the justifications for the perpetrators' actions were communicated and interpreted on the ground, within the frameworks of National Socialist morals and SS ethics. This is why the mass murder of Jews in Ukraine was continually justified in terms of "partisan threat" or as "useless eaters", and the framing of the murder of a girlfriend as defence against "espionage" or theft. The killers could still view themselves as having acted within the bounds of "decency". Here also the individual officer at this level becomes important.

Seizing the harvest and *Bandenbekämpfung*

On 4 June 1942 British Intelligence intercepted a message sent from Himmler to Korsemann regarding the redeployment of the police battalions in the southern sector away from the front line. "The question of the police battalions has now been cleared up. Those battalions which are not attached to the [LSAH] are to remain under your command. The greatest emphasis is to be laid upon seizing the harvest". The following day Korsemann "wired in triumph" to Kremetschug. "The RFSS has decided that the Police Regiment Special Purposes remains at the disposal of the [LSAH]. I ask for Police Regiment South to return under my command as soon as possible, as I can employ two battalions of this regiment for seizing the harvest in the region of the Reichskommissariat".¹⁰¹ One of the two battalions from PRS was Battalion 314. In mid-June Battalion 304 was released from the LSAH at the front near Tagonrog and also deployed to requisition crops and livestock for the Wehrmacht, for their own supply and to send back to Germany.¹⁰²

For this task Battalion 314 was initially deployed in the Kharkov area and Battalion 304 was again deployed in the Kiev area; both battalions were deployed in group or platoon strength to cover the large areas.¹⁰³ This operation was consistent with the plans of the *Grüne Mappe* to stop foodstuffs from the "surplus areas" of Ukraine being transported to other parts of former Soviet territory and into German channels. Wehrmacht propaganda attempted to justify to the soldiers what was to be done.

Each gram of bread or other food that I give to the population in the occupied territories out of good heartedness, I am withdrawing from the German people and thus my family...Thus, the German soldier must stay hard in the face of hungry women and children. If he does not, he endangers the nourishment of our people. The enemy is

¹⁰⁰ Matthäus, 'Ordinary Men', pp.135-6.

¹⁰¹ NA HW 16/6, GCCS report dated 21 June 1942.

¹⁰² ZStL B162/27795, p.1593. Dean, 'Gendarmerie', p.190.

¹⁰³ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2841. B162/27795, p.1593.

now experiencing the fate that he had planned for us. But he alone must also answer to the world and history.¹⁰⁴

Consistent with SS ethics of following what was deemed to be good for the *Volksgemeinschaft* and “no one else”, it seems likely that the officers of Battalions 314 and 304 sought, perhaps with the aid of official SS propaganda material, to justify this task in a similar way for their subordinates.

The tasks of the battalions involved supervising the collection of foodstuffs from the fields, searching houses for hidden goods and requisitioning livestock. Whatever was deemed to be necessary for the policemen’s needs was sent to the battalion kitchens. The civilian population were allocated only 20-kg of grain per adult and 10-kg for children.¹⁰⁵ The battalions were acting in much smaller sub-units and this gave individual policemen opportunity to form their own decisions on how they would treat the civilian population. It appears that the majority of the policemen chose to act according to their orders. A former member of the 1st Company, Battalion 314 recalled that in allocating the meagre rations to the civilians, “These directions were for the most part controlled exactly by our unit. There were also comrades who were not so exact. I remember also that other members acted very brutally”.¹⁰⁶ Along with foodstuffs, the police battalions were involved in rounding up and deporting back to Germany and elsewhere young men and women for forced labour. Compulsory labour service had been introduced in autumn 1941. The work was very low paid and the threat of imprisonment was enforced for those who attempted to avoid conscription. Deportations to Germany had begun in January 1942, but the battalion still encountered widespread evasion and resistance especially in the wooded areas in north Ukraine where there was more partisan activity.¹⁰⁷

During the years 1942 and 1943 the German occupation responded to the deteriorating strategic situation with terror and increased exploitation in the rear areas. During this period the German rear units also started to experience an increase in partisan activity which often led to brutal responses from the German occupying forces, including the razing of entire villages and mass killing.¹⁰⁸ The German police battalions, including Battalions 314 and 304, became increasingly involved in anti-partisan activity that also crossed over with the tasks of exploitation that both battalions had been

¹⁰⁴ Cited in Berkhoff, *Harvest*, p.166.

¹⁰⁵ ZStL B162/6690, statements by Küster, 1947, p.1267 and Hesterman, 1947, p.1276. B162/6649, statement by Heinz, 1964, p.88.

¹⁰⁶ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Heinz, 1964, p.88.

¹⁰⁷ Dean, ‘Gendarmerie’, p.189.

¹⁰⁸ Ben Shepherd, *War in the Wild East. The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.33.

performing from summer 1942 in particular with the “seizing of the harvest”. An anticipated crossover in these tasks can be seen in Goering’s directive from October 1942.

1. When combating partisans and clearing partisan-infested areas, all livestock to hand is to be removed to a safe area, and the food reserves likewise cleared away to deprive the partisans of them.
2. The entire male and female workforce that may be liable for labour service is to be forcibly recruited and taken to the plenipotentiary for labour, to be used either in the rear areas or in the homeland. Children are to be specially accommodated in camps to the rear.¹⁰⁹

The requisitioning of foodstuffs and labour was to serve as a military function in fighting the partisan threat as well as that of exploitation. Because of the way in which the German forces attempted to combat the increasing partisan threat, entire villages could be burned and their populations murdered or taken away on the slightest excuse or flimsiest suspicion that someone in the village had had contact with partisans.¹¹⁰ Rear units were now faced with an actual physical threat which, combined with their general fear and contempt for the “bandits” as well as the populations they had emerged from, their inability to effectively “pacify” such vast territories and a pervasive ideological view of “Jew Bolsheviks” and “eastern races”, meant that they regularly resorted to the use of extreme terror and violence.¹¹¹ Orpo and EG units were used to provide extra manpower for anti-partisan operations in cooperation with other units and as full “combat” units themselves.¹¹² It was only in the summer of 1942, after the front had become more stable, that British Intelligence again started regularly to intercept reports of anti-partisan operations, mostly concerning the central sector. In the south there appears to have been a considerable amount of anti-partisan activity reported, but overall it was judged to be “continual activity of a minor kind”. For the southern sector, the centre of partisan activity was in the area of the Pripet Marshes.¹¹³

From autumn 1942 a number of German units were active in the Pripet Marshes, including the “Pieper” *Kampfgruppe*, the *Reiterabteilung* “Fegelein”, Police Regiment 10 (formerly PRS) including Battalion 314, and Battalion 304 which was now part of Police Regiment 11.¹¹⁴ According to British Intelligence, until late-summer 1942 Battalion 314, along with Battalions 45, 303 and 311, had been active south of Kharkov fighting partisans and rounding up “communist agitators”, “whom they shot in great numbers ‘according to martial law’”.¹¹⁵ Following a period of four weeks’ training Battalion

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Shepherd, *Wild East*, p.127.

¹¹⁰ Shepherd, *Wild East*, p.121.

¹¹¹ Shepherd, *Wild East*, pp.36 and 45.

¹¹² Shepherd, *Wild East*, p.115.

¹¹³ NA HW 16/63, GCCS summary report ‘The German Police’, pp.25-9. NA HW 16/6, GCCS report for the period 15.11 to 14.12.42.

¹¹⁴ StA 120 Js, Beilagen File 2, p.66. Pieper, *Fegelein’s Horsemen*.

¹¹⁵ NA HW 16/63, GCCS summary report ‘The German Police’, p.29.

314 arrived in the Pripet Marshes in September 1942. Initially the battalion was dispersed among a number of small combat units; a former member of the 3rd Company recalled being part of a larger company called “SS-Group Gresser”, which was also strengthened by a Ukrainian battalion.¹¹⁶

Battalion 304 also arrived in September 1942 and was dispersed amongst the fighting groups, including a *Sonderkompanie* commanded by Joachim Pieper. Pieper personally led his own sub-unit which included a number of members of Battalion 304 and probably also 314; Panis appears to have been one of Pieper’s lieutenants until July 1943 when he was recalled to face the SS-court about his personal behaviour.¹¹⁷ By this time Major Deckert had been replaced and was commanding a battalion in Police Regiment 17.¹¹⁸

From November 1942 Battalion 304 appears to have been reformed and was operating in the Pripet Marshes. Depending on the type of operation or the strength of an identified partisan group, the battalion would sometimes be operating as a whole battalion, but also at company, platoon and group strength commanded by junior officers or NCOs.¹¹⁹ The general procedure followed by Battalion 304 was constructed from witness accounts of the numerous actions during this period by the East German investigators. Initially the battalion staff would be informed of the location of partisans by informers of the SD and, according to the expected size of the partisan group, either the whole battalion or a sub-unit moved out. Villages that were suspected of helping partisans or being the base for partisan groups were generally burned down. The men were usually shot and the rest of the population were either shot, burned in their houses, driven out or deported to Germany for forced labour. Crops and cattle continued to be taken.¹²⁰ Presumably, the commander on the spot would have a major role in deciding which courses of action would be taken and against whom. It appears that there may have been differences of opinion amongst the commanders concerning their choices of victims. A former policeman and driver for Dr Busse of Battalion 304 recalled an incident in 1943. After collecting some first aid material to be taken to a unit in the field that had been involved in a partisan action, the car had to be stopped and Busse got out to go to the unit on foot. The driver recalled that when Busse returned he said something like: “such a bunch of swines, they shot a blond child there. They’ll hear about this”. On the continuing journey Busse was so upset he had to vomit.¹²¹ This incident appears to have been a “revenge action”, perhaps for an injured policeman. The witness claimed he didn’t know what had happened but it seems likely that there

¹¹⁶ ZStL B162/6690, statement by Hestermann, 1947, p.1277.

¹¹⁷ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1593. BAB SSO 364A, SS personnel file Panis.

¹¹⁸ StA 120 Js, p.852. Letter of congratulations from Daluge to the Commander of Police Regiment 17 dated 28 September 1942 concerning a fighting action on 6 September. Deckert was commended for his actions.

¹¹⁹ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1593.

¹²⁰ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, p.1593.

¹²¹ StA 120 Js, statement by Tetsch, 1976, p.1010.

was an execution of civilians as he had heard shots. That Busse was angry about the shooting of a “blond child” in particular suggests strongly that executions of civilians were justified, and motivated, not only in terms of “military” expediency, but also in ideological terms.

In December 1942 and early 1943 it appears that the 1st Company of Battalion 314 were involved in exceptionally brutal “revenge actions” in the Pripet area. In 1964 a former reserve policeman who had joined the 1st Company in March 1942 recalled hearing of an incident in late-December 1942 in the village of Tonjesh where a “revenge action” (the witness used the term *Racheexpedition*) took place under the command of Lieutenant Schleich. Schleich eventually took over command of the 1st Company from Christ, but it is not clear whether this had happened by December 1942. The company had been attacked by a few partisans so Schleich ordered about 70 people, which may have been the entire village population, “old people, women and children”, to be locked in a church which was then set on fire.¹²² The same witness also recalled another “*Sonderaktion*” that took place in January or February 1943, again under the command of Schleich, in another small village in which 60 women and children were burned in a school building. The witness could remember that the 3rd Platoon were sitting on a hill while the 1st and 2nd Platoons set fire to the building and shot through the windows.¹²³ Nine other former policemen recalled hearing about at least one occasion around the beginning of 1943 in which the population of a village in that area were murdered in such a way.¹²⁴ It is not clear from the trial records whether the victims of these massacres were Jews or not. The dates of these incidents as given by the witnesses came just after a Hitler decree that was issued through the Army High Command on 16 December 1942 which ordered: “the most brutal means...against women and children also”. The decree declared that any misplaced scruples in this matter were treasonous to the German people.¹²⁵ Schleich would have been aware of this decree. However, even though these types of actions were endorsed at the highest level and perhaps even encouraged at the battalion leadership level, the actual decision to carry this out was taken by the commander on the spot, in this case Schleich.

In the midst of the anti-partisan war the assault against the Soviet Jews continued with the liquidation of the ghettoised populations that still survived in the Reich Commissariats.¹²⁶ On 14 October 1942 the Pieper *Kampfgruppe*, at a time when this force was made up of members of

¹²² ZStL B162/6649, statement by Heinz, 1964, p.90. Heinz claims to have seen the bones in a corner of the church at a later date. Heinz claimed that he returned to the Company on 28 December 1942, so the incident appears to have just preceded this date.

¹²³ ZStL B162/6649, statement by Heinz, 1964, pp.90-1.

¹²⁴ ZStL B162/6651, statements of former members of Police Battalion 314, p.594.

¹²⁵ Shepherd, *Wild East*, p.126.

¹²⁶ Shepherd, *Wild East*, p.116.

Battalions 314 and 304, took part in the liquidation of the Kobrin ghetto and nearby labour camps.¹²⁷ Both Battalions 314 and 304 suffered casualties during the period in the Pripet Marshes.¹²⁸ However, none of the officer ranks in either battalion was killed in action during this period. Lochbrunner of 304 received a gunshot wound to the head in November 1942 while in action against “Russian gangs” (*Banden*), but appears to have recovered fairly quickly in Munich.¹²⁹ Battalions 314 and 304 do appear to have been involved in some actual combat in fighting partisans during 1942 and 1943, but the casualty record, at least for the officer ranks, indicates that rather than actual military combat, for the most part the battalions were engaged in other means of combating the partisan threat. These included the rounding up of labour from the civilian population, robbing of foodstuffs and mass executions.

As has been shown, the policemen of Battalions 314 and 304 proved themselves capable of carrying out mass murder before they had experienced any “hardships”. Even though it appears some hardships were experienced over the winter of 1941-42 and in spring 1942 when the battalions were drawn into front-line fighting, but the policemen, in particular the officer ranks, appear to have still been able to enjoy themselves in Kharkov and Kiev, mostly at the expense of the local populations. The battalions were involved in many aspects of the Nazi imperial project, including mass killing and the creation of conditions in which millions of people would be starved to death and the immediate needs of the German war effort such as front-line combat, the requisitioning of food and labour and partisan fighting. There were examples of extreme violence demonstrated by smaller groups and individuals during and after the winter and spring of 1941 and 1942, but if the policemen were able to commit these acts as a result of brutalisation, it seems more likely to have been a result of consistent exposure to and involvement in mass murder rather than winter hardships. The witness who vividly recounted the cases of the burning of people by the 1st Company was a reserve policeman who had only joined Battalion 304 in March 1942, after the battalion’s involvement in large-scale massacres. He therefore may not have been as brutalised as many of his fellow policemen at that point. Of course it is likely that there were some who would also have remembered these actions but lied about them during the post-war trials, but that this witness felt compelled to relate these events to the investigators in detail suggests that they had a definite impact on his conscience. Whether enough members of the 1st Company would have been capable of carrying out such acts if ordered, against non-Jews, in July or August 1941 is difficult to determine.

¹²⁷ ZStL B162/26795, Final Report, 1988, pp.1593 and 1629. Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, NE and Jerusalem: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), pp.266-7.

¹²⁸ ZStL B162/6697, Final Summary Report, 1978, p.2841.

¹²⁹ BAB R19 2632, HA Orpo file Lochbrunner, medical report.

It appears that the “East” was viewed by many as a “zone of exception”¹³⁰ in which different rules applied and the individual policeman in his perception of a meteoric rise in status could make decisions that could mean the death of civilians on a whim. The policemen, and the SS officers in particular, were still supposed to be abiding by National Socialist morals and SS values but it appears that there were at times differences of opinion regarding codes of behaviour. Christ apparently felt it acceptable to have a relationship with a non-Aryan woman, whereas others, perhaps some fellow officers in Battalion 314, may have felt otherwise. One officer or NCO in Battalion 304 considered it necessary to include a blond child in an execution whereas Dr Busse considered the act disgraceful and perhaps worthy of punishment. Christ was clearly an extremely violent individual who was probably motivated by factors other than Nazi ideology and SS ethics who even had to be reined in by his superior, Severth. However, in the midst of astonishing violence encouraged and facilitated by NS morals and SS ethics, it is difficult to distinguish between those who were acting “excessively” and those who still considered themselves to be “decent”. An inability to make such a distinction may have prevented Christ’s SS colleagues from reporting his acts to SS judicial authorities.

That the SS leadership felt obliged to relax restrictions on sexual relations in the East because so many chose to ignore the rules is an example of central policy being led by actual conditions on the periphery. Individual commanders had a considerable impact on the behaviour of their subordinates on the ground in a variety of ways. Aside from the mass executions, in every situation in which Battalions 314 and 304 were involved, the policemen were acting in relatively autonomous sub-units under the command of a junior officer or NCO. In situations where units were carrying out the tasks of guarding a ghetto, collecting and supervising the harvest, “revenge actions”, and even in day to day living in Kharkov and Kiev where the men were garrisoned in companies in different parts of the cities, the commanding officer could determine the parameters of the behaviour of their men; whether in leading by example or by issuing orders or instructions determined by the situation on the ground. Not least, it was down to the officers to justify and rationalise the actions of the policemen at every step. Justifications along the lines that the victims of mass murder were “useless eaters” or “partisan helpers”, or that the “revenge actions” were necessary as well as fortifying the notion that the perpetrators continued to act within the realms of “decency”, could all fit within the parameters of SS morality.

¹³⁰ “Lands of Exception, Zones of Exception”, see Bloxham, *Final Solution*, pp.282-95.

Conclusion

Angrick has demonstrated that Einsatzgruppe D was a heterogeneous unit. In the same way Police Battalions 314 and 304 were also heterogeneous units being comprised of groups of policemen from different social, generational and professional backgrounds and sub-units with different functions. As far as National Socialist affiliations were concerned, there was a marked difference between the officer corps and the rank and file. Mallmann is correct in his evaluation that the rank and file of the police battalions were not “elite troops”, but neither were they the “dregs” of the manpower pool. Most were volunteers who joined the police for a change in career, were only superficially vetted by the SS and relatively few were SS men or NSDAP members. Most were old enough to have experienced political norms as adults other than the Nazis and some would have had other political allegiances before 1933. Like de Mildt’s “Euthanasia” and Aktion Reinhard perpetrators, the collective background profile of the rank and file of Battalions 314 and 304 resembles more closely that of a group of “ordinary citizens” rather than “ideological warriors”.¹ In contrast, all the officers, and probably most of the NCOs were SS men and almost all of the more senior officers were former Freikorps or SA members. The junior officers were all SS and NSDAP members and had nearly all spent much or all of their teenage years in the ranks of the HJ. This was a much more “Nazified” group than Mallmann has allowed for in his analysis of the police battalions and certainly less “ordinary” than Browning’s reserve policemen of Battalion 101.

Police Battalions 314 and 304 were involved in nearly every aspect of Nazi population policies and mass murder in Eastern Europe and the actions of the battalions mirrored the rapid radicalisation of Nazi policy from 1940 to 1942. Both battalions were involved in colonial population projects in Poland in 1940 and 1941 including the guarding of ghettos and the rounding up of forced labour. From summer 1941 both battalions carried out a large number of massacres in Ukraine of mainly Jewish civilians but also Soviet POWs and Ukrainian civilians and profited from the famines in Kiev and Kharkov. Battalion 314 was also one of the first units to be involved in the use of gas vans. The two battalions were not trailblazers in that, both in Poland and Ukraine, they entered areas in which racial policies and mass murder had already been committed by other German units. The actions of Battalions 314 and 304 followed a general pattern regarding the changing targets of mass murder, including Jewish women in late-August and children in autumn 1941 in the massacres at times when some other units were doing so too. However, these two battalions can certainly be considered as

¹ Dick de Mildt, *In the Name of the People: Perpetrators of Genocide in the Reflection of their Post-War Prosecution in West Germany* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1996), p.311.

being two of the “vanguard” units of mass murder in Ukraine and there are indications that both battalions carried out more massacres than have been highlighted in this study.

In contrast to Westermann’s argument on Police Battalion 310 and Bartov on the Wehrmacht, the policemen of Battalions 314 and 304 were not brutalised by extreme hardships at war and the experience of front-line combat. Battalions 314 and 304 did experience “hardships” during the harsh winter conditions of 1941-42 along with other German units, but this was only after both battalions had already carried out a number of massacres in the summer and autumn. An acclimatisation to violence occurred over a period of time through participation in the increasingly radicalised Nazi policy in Eastern Europe. Much like Welzer has found with Reserve Battalion 45, by following the actions of Battalions 314 and 304 from 1940 to 1942 we can see thresholds being crossed step by step.² From the prosecution of Nazi racial policies in Poland in 1940 and 1941 which included violence and instances of killing, to the mass murder of hundreds of Jewish men in July 1941 and the murder of women in August 1941 in Ukraine, to the large-scale massacres of entire communities, including children, from Autumn 1941 a radicalising process can be traced in which the policemen are learning and changing as a result of their involvement in an increasingly radicalising process of mass murder.³

Building on the basic training, the experiences of the policemen in carrying out Nazi racial policies in Poland was significant in preparing the battalions as units of mass murder. Browning’s contention that Germans were more transformed by their experiences in Poland from 1939 to 1941 appears to have been the case with Battalions 314 and 304. The experience of Poland was an important step for the majority of the policemen in their habitualisation to violence. This is most evident with the men of Battalion 304 who as guards for the Warsaw ghetto were both witnesses to and contributors to the extreme conditions within the ghetto. It is not known how many civilians were killed by members of Battalions 314 and 304 in Poland, but it is clear that murder was part of the scope of actions for many of the policemen before they entered Ukraine. This is particularly evident with the killing course attended by some “enthusiasts” from Battalion 304 in Cracow in January 1941.

It appears that Mallmann’s assertion that the men of the police battalions had no time to become brutalised or for a gradual acclimatisation to the violence cannot be applied to Battalions 314 and 304. The majority of the policemen of Battalions 314 and 304 had been in Poland carrying out Nazi racial policies with the units for eight or ten months before taking part in the first massacres in

² Welzer, ‘Killing and Morality’, pp.174-76.

³ Ervin Staub, ‘The Psychology of Bystanders, Perpetrators, and Heroic Helpers’, in Leonard S. Newman and Ralph Erber (eds.), *Understanding Genocide. The Social Psychology of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.22.

summer 1941, and also experienced a continuation of gradual acclimatisation to mass murder once in Ukraine. However, acclimatisation on its own is not sufficient enough of an explanation for the abilities of these units to persistently commit mass murder. Certain devices and configurations were also in play in ensuring that enough of the policemen remained willing to consistently contribute to the tasks of the battalions. Several officers proved themselves to be prepared to perform leadership roles in mass murder without an acclimatisation period. Bauer and Panis are known to have led massacres within the first few days of their arrivals with Battalion 314. The seven graduates of the 19th Officer Training course arrived at their units just before the battalions were involved in the transition to genocide in Ukraine in late-summer and early-autumn 1941. These seven young officers with an average age of 21, along with the other 65 graduates of the training course that were distributed amongst the police battalions in former Soviet territory, were clearly considered to be ready to perform such pivotal roles immediately. The first large massacre carried out by Battalion 304 was in Starokonstantinov on 2 September 1941 and the evidence suggests that Lochbrunner, Seeber and Becker would have arrived with the battalion in the few days before that date. The two glowing reports of Panis and Seeber written by their commanding officers regarding their roles as leaders, educators and role models suggest that these junior officers were ready to perform the role required of them and continued to do so into 1942 and some into 1943. With the exception of Lochbrunner, none of the junior officers of the first HJ generation left the battalions before 1943, and all of them, including Jahnhorst were promoted on schedule.

The officers and NCOs played a significant role in creating a unit culture, starting with basic training. The police battalions were constructed along a military model and were trained as a para-military security force. The training appears to have been primarily geared towards carrying out Nazi colonial projects in Eastern Europe. The Ideological aspects in particular, which included explicit antisemitic aspects, encouraging the policemen to act and feel as *Herrenmenschen*, would certainly have created a unit culture which was taken with them into Poland and Ukraine. Whether or not the individual policemen had actually internalised the ideological messages given to them as part of the basic training, the policemen are likely to have been prepared for the type of behaviour expected of them in Poland and certainly would have known who their primary targets were likely to be. But perhaps more important than the relative effects of basic training, is the fact that the policemen were often isolated in small groups for long periods, thus forced to spend a great deal of time, most of which was not spent engaged in killing operations, in the company of their fellow policemen. Dorothee Frank has argued that comradeship and conformity, stronger in smaller units such as the platoons of the police battalions, increases pressure to participate in the group's activities that, in this case, includes mass murder, while simultaneously reducing the burden of individual

responsibility.⁴ Similarly, Kühne argues that comradeship was important in developing a specific group morality that enabled groups of perpetrators such as those discussed here to perform actions outside of civilian morality and international law.⁵ Philip Zimbardo has argued that group pressures are enough to induce individuals to accept and perform roles without leadership.⁶ However, the leaders of the companies and platoons of Battalions 314 and 304 had a significant impact on group behaviour in the sub-units. Very often the only officer and authority in the vicinity for extended periods, the junior officers were responsible for social gatherings such as the “fellowship evenings”, regular “lessons” and (organised) informal discussions. As on the spot representatives of the SS they were also responsible for setting parameters for behaviour and enforcing discipline through mechanisms such as the SS-police courts. As Staub has highlighted, a markedly strong respect for authority was part of German military culture and should not be underestimated as a factor in fostering comradeship, conformity and group culture in these sub-units.⁷

At times these officers were acting under the leadership of the battalion or company commanders or under a superior officer of the Einsatzgruppen. However, there were many occasions when the junior officers were the only officers present and were endowed with considerable autonomy in their decision making and use of initiative. In Warsaw the smaller guard units of the ghetto would be commanded by NCOs or junior officers. In the Lublin district, Bauer and Jahnhorst led “hunting platoons” and, on at least one occasion, Hertel led a unit in action against Polish resistance; actions that often included the executions of civilians. In the Kovel area, Jahnhorst and Hertel were the senior police commanders in relatively large towns in which there were multiple massacres carried out by the sub-units under their command. Bauer was the commanding officer of a number of actions that included executions, including the massacre in Mielnica in which the decision to kill the Jewish civilians on the spot was his. In the Pripet Marshes the evidence suggests that Schleich led at least one “revenge action” in which the population of a town were murdered in a particularly horrifying way. Like the ninety officer graduates of the SD training school highlighted by Angrick that formed the “backbone” of Einsatzgruppe D, the junior officers of Battalions 314 and 304 were consistently in direct contact with the men in the field while the higher ranked officers could, and often did, remain remote. In their scope for autonomous action these lower-ranked officers, as goes Matthäus’ argument on “controlled escalation”, enjoyed considerable agency on the perimeter and

⁴ Dorothee Frank, *Menschen Töten* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 2006), pp.196 and 266.

⁵ See the discussion in Jensen, ‘Introduction’, in Jensen and Szejnmann, *Ordinary People*, pp.10-14.

⁶ See the discussion in S. Alexander Haslam and Stephen Reicher, ‘Beyond the Banality of Evil: Three Dynamics of an Interactionist Social Psychology of Tyranny’, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33 (2007), pp.617-18.

⁷ Staub, ‘Bystanders, Perpetrators and Heroic Helpers’, p.16.

in this sense were a significant driving force in the centre-periphery dynamic in radicalising mass murder on the ground in the former Soviet territories.

There appears to have been a range of behaviour from the officer ranks of the battalions. All the officers were SS men and nearly all had a long history of NSDAP affiliations, but not all behaved as “eager killers” or “*Exzeßtäter*”. Both the battalion commanders who were in charge during autumn 1941 of Battalions 314 and 304, Majors Severt and Deckert, remained somewhat remote from the everyday experiences of the rank and file, including the massacres. According to Bauer, Severt was keen to leave more “uncomfortable matters” to his adjutant, Steinmann, and appears to have been reluctant to involve his battalion in the carrying out of the large massacre in Dnepropetrovsk. Deckert was remembered by most former members of Battalion 304, officers and men, as being largely absent. Deckert mixed professionally and socially in high ranking Nazi circles, so was probably given an “opportunity” to prove himself with Battalion 304. Battalion 304 started carrying out large scale massacres with the arrival of Deckert and appears to have finished with his departure. Jeckeln appears to have been very satisfied with the prolific performance of the battalion under Deckert’s leadership, considering the battalion to be his best. Deckert’s letter regarding the punishment of three policemen for murdering Jews in Poland certainly used the type of language that was common at the time among higher ranking SS men in reference to the mass murders that they were committing. Severt does not appear to have had the same qualms over rounding up and imprisoning the thousands of Jews that were to be shot in Dnepropetrovsk. Neither man would have been in the position of battalion commander at that time had they not been deemed by Himmler and Daluge to have been capable of commanding units that were to carry out numerous massacres. Therefore, although their leadership may have been more remote from the actual actions of the battalions than the men of the companies under their command, they would still have had a personal influence over the actions of the battalions.

On the ground, Christ of Battalion 314 is a more obvious example of an *Exzeßtäter* and his murderous actions would have widened the parameters of permissible behaviour of the policemen under his command. Some of his actions however, such as firing wildly into a crowd of waiting victims and the murder of the carpet dealer and dancer in Kharkov, would not have been considered to be the type of “decent” behaviour desired by Himmler of his SS officers. Wendorff, on the other hand, appears to have been somewhat less enthusiastic participant in mass murder. Wendorff, a former Freikorps member and SS man was valued by his superiors and his subordinates for his military knowledge, comradely nature and abilities as an educator, including ideological instruction. Like Severt perhaps, Wendorff does not seem likely to have necessarily disagreed with the massacres in principle, but preferred to delegate the actual leadership of these actions to his second

in command, Bauer. Wendorff and Jahnhorst both experienced illness during the period when Battalion 314 were carrying out massacres in 1941, and both left the battalion that year. It is not clear whether their illnesses and their departures were because of the actions of the battalion, as Jahnhorst claimed (a post-war witness did claim that Jahnhorst “did not get on well” with the other officers) during the post-war investigations. Neither man suffered any career setbacks as a result of their leaving.

If there was a mix of behaviour and responses to involvement in mass murder among the rank and file and the higher officer ranks, there is no evidence to suggest any significant deviations from Himmler’s desired behaviour on the part of the junior officers of the first HJ generation. This group of perpetrators was perhaps the clearest adherents to Himmler’s conception of an SS vanguard. These men performed a pivotal role in the progression and practice of mass murder on the ground. They had been cultivated as the future Nazi vanguard in the HJ, as young adults they were trained to personify the SS elite in their appearance, manner, thinking and action, and were to act as role models for their subordinates in the companies and platoons of the police battalions. These junior officers formed part of what Browning has termed a “crucial nucleus” of eager perpetrators which had a disproportionate influence on events on the ground; not as psychopaths or bloodthirsty enthusiasts, but as representatives and enforcers of SS ethics ensuring that the mass murders were performed orderly, efficiently and “decently”.

The testimony of the survivor of Gaisin especially and other witness testimonies show that the massacres carried out by the police battalions were not the clinically-organised type that the leadership strove for; rather, they were extremely violent at every stage. Evidence from the post-war trials shows a range of behaviour by the policemen during the massacres. Some policemen refused to participate as shooters and some suffered psychological problems. In both battalions it is clear that those policemen who requested not to shoot were given other duties and suffered no consequences of note for doing so. Only two reliable accounts, both from survivor witnesses, attest to policemen helping to save Jews from the shootings. These accounts demonstrate that there were possibilities for policemen to help or save potential victims should they have wished to do so before the shootings, during the round-ups or even during the massacres. Policemen could also refuse to participate or request to leave the battalion. It appears that care was taken by the leadership of the battalions to spread the responsibility for the shootings as widely as possible. Only volunteers were required to shoot and, in the case of Battalion 304, the companies alternated responsibility for providing the shooters for each massacre. It appears that the few policemen who may not have been inclined to participate as shooters or felt unable to perform such a duty were offset by a few enthusiasts who could consistently be relied on to perform the tasks required of the units. The

turnover of personnel for both battalions before experiencing actual combat in 1942 does not appear to have been very high, so the conclusion can be drawn that a large number of the policemen were comfortable enough to stay with their units and contribute to the massacres by performing duties other than the actual shootings. Part of the role of the junior officers was to maintain the morale and discipline of the men under their command both of which were important to maintain for the carrying out of mass murder in the desired manner. Welzer has shown that the killing operations could be choreographed in order to take advantage of a division of labour so initially reluctant individual policemen could ease their way from limited to full participation.⁸ The junior officers of Battalions 314 and 304 played a lead role in the organisation and perpetration of the massacres. They were often involved in the selection of the victims and the selection of the killers from their units. The selection of the shooters was not done randomly as Welzer has found for Reserve Battalion 45, but, as Bauer admitted in his post-war testimony, more selectively. The officers knew which men they could count on to perform particular tasks. The junior officers were often present at the killing sites, giving the shooting orders or carrying out the shooting themselves. Angrick has found that platoon leaders in Einsatzgruppe D demonstrated the shooting of victims first so that the rank and file would know what was expected of them. Welzer also highlights an incident when a company commander in Battalion 45 demonstrated killing for his subordinates.⁹ This type of demonstrative violence was most evident in Bauer's beating of the Jewish man before the massacre carried out by part of the 2nd Company of Battalion 314 in Mielnica. On the occasions when these men were the officers in command of a massacre they could organise the method of shooting to lessen the "spiritual" impact on their subordinates, by organising the murders to resemble a traditional "military type" execution, or by the use of machine-guns to speed up the process. Rather than simply the group situational factors influencing the actions of the policemen, we can see that the situations themselves were to an extent created by individual officers by managing, choreographing and interpreting the events.

Leonard S. Newman has argued that "situations" themselves do not even objectively exist but need to be cognitively constructed.¹⁰ Ideological instruction in the form of "educational lessons" held in the field was a means to impart meaning for the actions of the police units and there are many examples of the officers of Battalions 314 and 304 performing their role as "educators" through speeches, lessons, social get-togethers and demonstrations. Mallmann has argued that little time was given to ideological instruction and had no discernible effect on the actions of the policemen.

⁸ Welzer, 'Killing and Morality', pp.174-5.

⁹ Angrick, 'Einsatzgruppe D', pp.86-7, Welzer, 'Killing and Morality', p.174.

¹⁰ Leonard S. Newman, 'What Is a "Social-Psychological" Account of Perpetrator Behaviour. The Person Versus the Situation in Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*', in *Understanding Genocide*, p.51.

However, as Matthäus has argued, the effectiveness of the ideological training lay less in pedantic indoctrination during basic training than in the creation of an ideological atmosphere which served as an important part of the unit culture and esprit de corps. Contrary to Mallmann's suggestions, considerable time and effort was given to continuing ideological "cultivation" delivered by junior officers through a variety of means in the field where it was most effective.

The clearest connection that can be identified between ideological ideas and the act of mass murder on the part of the "grass roots" perpetrators can be seen in the attempts to legitimise the actions of the perpetrators and rationalise the events surrounding them through ideological "lessons" or sessions. These sessions were regularly delivered by the junior officers before or after mass murder operations. Martin Shaw has argued that the key to mass killing is its legitimacy, or more precisely, overcoming the problem of legitimacy in the minds of the perpetrators.¹¹ Similarly, Richard Overy argues that a state in which normative moral responsibility is suspended and replaced by a "moral obligation to take part", makes more sense cognitively in explaining the actions of a policeman than the impact of any antisemitic lessons he attended during training.¹² One of the rationales consistently used as a justification for the massacres of Jewish civilians in Ukraine by officers of the battalions was that of the Jews as a "security threat", an increasingly fantastical portrayal of the actions in terms of military necessity. This would have the effect of making individual policemen feel obliged to take part, not only in defence of a threatened German people, but also of their platoon comrades operating in a hostile and potentially deadly environment. As we have seen, efforts were consciously made by the commanding officers to not only portray the actions in military terms, but to orchestrate the shootings themselves as military operations. As Matthäus has argued, it appear to have mattered less to the policemen what they did, so long as "certain legitimizing methods" were applied.

The junior officers were the ones in direct contact with the men of their companies or platoons and as the authority figure played the key role in justifying the acts for their men. Recent social-psychological studies indicate that leadership on the ground is important in interpreting the situations the rank and file perpetrators found themselves in and the significance of the actions after the fact. Staub has argued that in difficult times subordinates in military organisations tend to "accept the authorities' definitions of reality".¹³ In a recent article on the legacy of the Milgram experiments, social-psychologists Reicher, Haslam and Miller have found that it is the justifications

¹¹ Martin Shaw, *War and Genocide* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p.17.

¹² Richard Overy, "'Ordinary Men,' Extraordinary Circumstances: Historians, Social Psychology, and the Holocaust', *Journal of Social Issues*, 70, 3 (2014), pp.524-5.

¹³ Staub, 'Bystanders, Perpetrators and Heroic Helpers', p.16.

provided by the “authority” rather than simply obedience to orders on the part of the subordinate or participant that is important. The participant is therefore persuaded that carrying out the action “is the right thing to do”.¹⁴ Maintaining an atmosphere and group culture suffused in ideological principles and providing justifications that can only be made sense of within this cultural framework were key contributions towards the perpetration of mass murder by the units of Battalions 314 and 304. It is in this role that the junior officers were most important to the killing process.

Like the junior officers in Einsatzgruppe D and in the Wehrmacht, the junior officers of Police Battalions 314 and 304 were not just a connecting link between the hierarchy of the Orpo and the rank and file, but were the ideological and organisational backbone of their units. This group of officers resemble the leadership cadre of the RSHA in that they were from the upper educational strata of German society, were hand-picked for roles that involved active, dynamic leadership entrenched in a Nazi worldview and SS ethics. As lieutenants in the police battalions, these men did not enjoy the same level of “unrestrained initiative” or “dynamic radicalism” as the higher ranking RSHA leaders, but were considerably younger and at the beginning of their careers in the SS. These men are representative of a radicalised minority of German youth rather than of German society as a whole, but were nonetheless products of the Nazi vision to remould German society. Like the RSHA leaders, they were the product of a Nazi veneration of youth and were the first wave of a radicalised elite and the clearest representatives of the Nazi ideals of a *Volksgemeinschaft* that emanated from the HJ. In the HJ and during officer training they were cultivated to be, and came to perceive themselves as, the vanguard and future elite of the SS.

¹⁴ Stephen D. Reicher, S. Alexander Haslam, Arthur G. Miller, ‘What Makes a Person a Perpetrator? The Intellectual, Moral, and Methodological Arguments for Revisiting Milgram’s Research on the Influence of Authority’, *Journal of Social Issues*, 70, 3 (2014), p.399.

Abbreviations

BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin
BAK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz
BDC	Berlin Document Centre
BDM	Bund Deutscher Mädel
BdO	Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei
DJ	Deutsches Jungvolk
DGIV	Durchgangsstrasse IV
GCCS	Government Code and Cypher School
GG	Generalgouvernement
HJ	Hitler Youth
<i>HGS</i>	<i>Holocaust and Genocide Studies</i>
HSSPF	Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer
<i>JGR</i>	<i>Journal of Genocide Research</i>
<i>JuNS</i>	<i>Justiz und NS Verbrechen</i>
KdO	Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei
Lapo	Kasernierte Landespolizei
LSAH	SS-Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler"
MBI	Mitteilungsblätter für die Weltanschauliche Erziehung der Ordnungspolizei
NA	National Archives, London
NSKK	Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps
OK	Ortskommandantur
OT	Organisation Todt
PID	Politischer Informationsdienst
PRC	Police Regiment Centre
PRS	Police Regiment South
RAD	Reichsarbeitsdienst
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt
SD	Sicherheitsdienst
SS-TV	SS-Totenkopfverbände
SS-VT	SS-Verfügungstruppen

SSO	SS Organisations
USCF	USC Shoah Foundation Visual Archive
WO	War Office
ZStL	Zentrale Stelle Ludwigsburg

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The National Archives, Kew, London

HW16 Government Code and Cypher School (GCCS), German Police Section.

WO War Office.

Staatsarchiv München

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